

TRAVEL AND TOURISM TRENDS

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Demographic trends which impact leisure time activities are highlighted, with particular emphasis given to the impacts of the growth of minority populations. Data was collected from recreationists to National Forests and from residents of an urban community. The data indicate a shift in outdoor recreation activities.

Introduction

Demographic trends evidenced today can give us insight into what might be expected in the years to come. These trends are important in and of themselves and also because of their affect on other issues, such as their impact on leisure activities. Trends briefly examined in this paper and linked to leisure patterns include the graying of America, MOBYs (Mothers Older when Baby is Young), the sandwich generation (those who care for their parents when also caring for their own children), and the middle-age economy (characterized by cautious consumer spending and more saving). Most emphasis is given to the potential impacts of the growth of the minority population for outdoor leisure activities, particularly the growing Hispanic population.

Leisure activities linked to the growth of the minority population focus on outdoor pursuits and emphasize adventure travel (hang gliding, bungee jumping, and heli-skiing), conservation travel ("green" vacationing and volunteer hosting), traditional natural resource activity participation (horseback touring, off-road vehicle riding, and natural history hiking), and non-traditional natural resource activity participation (camera safaris and mountain bike riding).

It is expected that changes in demographic patterns will influence leisure pursuits. It is not known how the combination of the demographic shifts will impact leisure pursuits.

Socio-demographic Trends

Current trends may afford insight into what can be expected in years to come. Each trend will be briefly introduced as well as linked to their potential impact to leisure activities--particularly outdoor recreation activities.

The graying of America, as the name suggests, indicates that people are living longer. Indeed, this is one of the fastest growing age cohorts. The graying of America may influence participation in leisure activities in several ways. First, this group generally has good financial assets and leisure businesses could benefit from this affluence. Second, senior citizens have been thought to be somewhat more sedentary than their younger counterparts which might suggest that leisure gives need to provide more activities geared to sedentary populations--such as walking tours with educational emphases. Recreation providers might also concentrate on highly developed recreation sites for this age group.

MOBYs is a relatively new term which suggests that many women are waiting later in life to start families. These mothers may have better financial standing than do younger mothers, thus allowing older moms to provide for more recreational activities for their offspring. This may include more purchases of recreational equipment for the home and for outdoor activities. Because many of these MOBYs are employed outside the home, they may be looking for more leisure activities nearby or activities which require little planning.

The sandwich generation is another trend on the rise. In some cases the combining of families provides more expendable income, while in other cases it means greater caretaking placed on the "sandwich" members. In all cases it suggests a need to focus on leisure activities that would appeal to the entire age span and may suggest a need for developed sites for recreational activities.

The middle-age economy is characterized by cautious spending and increased saving. This suggests that baby boomers are changing their spending patterns which will influence recreational patterns. It could mean that boomers may concentrate their money into one area and not others. One area experiencing growth is the recreational vehicle business. This represents one large expenditure for a family, but one that has utility for a long time. Outdoor recreation sites, like campgrounds, may want to increase spaces for these large vehicles. Those recreation providers wanting to attract middle-age economy members may want to emphasize their low-cost or free activities.

The growth of the minority population is another demographic trend worthy of note. It is expected that during the 1990s we will shift from a society dominated by Anglos and rooted in Western culture to a world society characterized by three large racial and ethnic minorities--African American, Latino or Hispanic American (hereafter called Hispanic), and Asian Americans. Trends focusing on Hispanic groups suggest younger, larger families, an expanding middle class, and increasing educational attainment levels. Recreational or leisure facilities may need to accommodate larger groups, focus on family activities, focus on the entire age span, and offer a range of recreational costs.

The remainder of the paper examines outdoor recreation activities for actual participation levels as well as desired participation levels. Then the paper focuses specifically on comparing Anglo patterns of participation (real and desired) to Hispanic patterns of participation (real and desired).

Methods

Data were collected from 200 visitors to National Forests in 1992 will be used to highlight points made by the paper. Other data, collected from 130 urban city residents in 1992 will also be used to illustrate points made in the paper. Both sets of data show current and desired patterns of participation. On-site data were collected using self-administered questionnaires while the urban city data was collected via telephone surveys. Both survey types were available in English and Spanish. Just over half the sample were people of Hispanic descent (54 percent) and the remainder were Anglo (45 percent) respondents.

Respondents were asked if they had heard of, engaged in, and/or desired to engage in several outdoor recreation activities. These activities included hang gliding, bungee jumping, heli-skiing, "green" vacationing, volunteer hosting, horseback touring, off-road vehicle riding, natural history hiking, camera safaris and mountain bike riding.

Results

In general, most respondents had not tried any of the activities listed--indeed, few had heard of many of the activities--yet most respondents reported a desire to try these activities in the future. For example, few had heard of or tried wildlife viewing or camera safaris though most (75 percent) expressed an interest in trying it in the future. Other examples were ecotourism and volunteer hosting, where few had heard of them before though most reported they would like to try them. The exceptions were heli-skiing and bungee jumping where few people had heard of these, tried or desired to try these activities in the future.

Ethnic and Racial Group Analysis

For this paper, the comparison will be of people of Hispanic origin to Anglos.

While Anglos were more likely to have tried natural history hikes and Hispanics expressed a greater interest in horseback tours,

there were no other statistically significant differences between Anglo and Hispanic groups. However, some interesting patterns did emerge.

Matrix One, below, shows actual levels of participation in the outdoor recreation activities. If more than 30 percent of the sample had engaged in the activity then it was considered to be a "traditional" activity for that group. For example, more than 30 percent of the Anglos in the sample engaged in natural history hikes, horseback tours, and mountain biking so those activities were considered traditional for that group. For the Hispanics, more than 30 percent had engaged in mountain biking and natural history hikes. Thus, Anglos have three traditional activities from the list provided while Hispanics have two traditional activities.

Matrix One. Actual participation by racial/ethnic groups.

	<u>Anglo</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Traditional (30%+)	Natural history hikes Horseback tours Mountain biking	Mountain biking Natural history hikes
Non-traditional	Ecotourism Camera safaris Hang gliding Volunteer hosting Heli-skiing Bungee jumping	Horseback tours Ecotourism Volunteer hosting Camera safaris Hang gliding Heli-skiing Bungee jumping

Matrix Two shows desired levels of participation in the outdoor recreation activities. If more than 30 percent of the sample desired to engage in the activity then it was considered to be potentially a "traditional" activity for that group. For example, more than 30 percent of the Anglos in the sample desired to engage in natural history hikes, horseback tours, mountain biking, and hang gliding--so those activities have the potential to become traditional for that group. For the Hispanics, more than 30 percent desired to engage in mountain biking, natural history hikes, horseback tours, camera safaris, and volunteer hosting--so those activities have the potential to become traditional for that group. Thus, Anglos might have four traditional activities from the list provided while Hispanics might have five traditional activities.

Matrix Two. Desired participation by racial/ethnic group.

	<u>Anglo</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Traditional (30%+)	Natural history hikes Horseback tours Mountain biking Hang gliding	Horseback tours Natural history hikes Mountain biking Camera safaris Volunteer hosting
Non-traditional	Camera safaris Ecotourism Bungee jumping Volunteer hosting Heli-skiing	Ecotourism Hang gliding Heli-skiing Bungee jumping

For the most part, there is a consistency between activities in which Anglos participate and those they wish to try. However, for each activity listed there is at least a 20 percent gap for Hispanics between having tried an activity and desire to try it. This suggests a potential market demand that is not currently being served.

Conclusions

Demographic trends can give us insight into what might be expected in the years to come. While several trends were listed, only growth of the minority population was addressed. This one demographic shift suggests changes in what might consider "traditional" activities. From the matrices above we can see the shift in desired activities of Hispanics in terms of more activities (both traditional and non-traditional) as well as adding a conservation travel aspect. While other societal factors may preclude Hispanics from participating to their desired level, it is important to see what might be desired from this user group. The examination of combinations of demographic trends will give us greater insight into potential impacts on leisure pursuits.