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# LEISURE OF DISABLED TOURISTS

## Barriers to Participation



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**Abstract:** Tourists, especially those with disabilities, experience barriers to leisure participation that undermine their sense of freedom and feelings of personal control. This article examines some of the barriers that disproportionately affect disabled tourists. It categorizes them as intrinsic barriers (resulting primarily from the tourist's own levels of cognitive, physical, and psychological function); environmental barriers (consisting of externally imposed limitations); and interactive barriers (resulting from the reciprocal interaction between the tourist and the immediate milieu). In addition, the potential effects of these barriers upon tourists with disabilities are examined, and specific implications for leisure are presented. The unique impacts of barriers to participation upon disabled tourists await empirical investigation, but it is hypothesized that the combined effect of these barriers may reduce the amount of leisure satisfaction derived from tourism. **Keywords:** barriers to participation, disabled persons, leisure-tourist experience, leisure satisfaction.

**Résumé:** Les loisirs des touristes handicapés: les barrières à la participation. Les touristes, surtout ceux qui ont des infirmités, rencontrent des barrières à la participation aux loisirs qui amoindrissent leur sens de la liberté et leurs sentiments de contrôle personnel. Le présent article examine quelques-unes des barrières qui affectent les touristes handicapés de façon disproportionnée. L'article catégorise ces barrières comme intrinsèques (qui résultent principalement des niveaux de fonctionnement perceptif, physique ou psychologique du touriste lui-même); environnementales (qui consistent en des limitations imposées de l'extérieur) et interactives (qui résultent de l'interaction réciproque entre le touriste et le milieu immédiat). En plus, on examine les effets éventuels de ces barrières sur les touristes qui ont des infirmités, et on présente les implications spécifiques pour les loisirs. Les impacts particuliers des barrières à la participation sur les touristes handicapés attendent l'investigation empirique, mais on peut formuler l'hypothèse que l'effet cumulatif de ces barrières peut réduire l'importance de la satisfaction du loisir que l'on tire du tourisme. **Mots clef:** barrières à la participation, personnes handicapées, expérience loisir-touristique, satisfaction récréative.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tourism, to be considered a leisure-related phenomenon, must be viewed within the context of a rule-generated, rather than rule-governed, model of social behavior (Pearce 1982). Instead of considering tourists to

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be passive participants whose behaviors are controlled by other individuals and external events, a rule-generated model is consistent with "the self-directed, autonomous, nondeterministic aspect of motivation" (Pearce 1982:53). Implicit, therefore, is the notion that tourists, whether disabled or not, perceive themselves as having the freedom to make choices and having at least some degree of personal control over their own experiences. Without these feelings of freedom and personal control, tourism could not be considered to offer the potential for leisure. (Iso-Ahola 1982; Kelly 1981; Parker 1981).

For most leisure participants, including tourists, leisure choices are rarely, if ever, totally unrestrained. As noted by Iso-Ahola and Mannell (1985:111) "human beings do not live in ideal societies, and their leisure is often not a realm of freedom." Because leisure choices are not made in a vacuum, barriers (or constraints) to leisure participation may be present to prevent or limit the tourist's leisure experience (Francken and van Raaij 1981; Iso-Ahola and Mannell 1985; Searle and Jackson 1985). These barriers, despite having received very little emphasis in tourism literature, may be critical factors in the decision making process regarding travel, as well as the psychological outcomes of the tourist's leisure experience. Perceived freedom is central to the concept of leisure (Iso-Ahola 1980), and barriers to leisure participation inevitably undermine a tourist's sense of freedom.

Every tourist undoubtedly experiences barriers to leisure participation, but disabled individuals, in particular, have been noted as disproportionately affected by leisure constraints (Kennedy, Austin and Smith 1987; Wade and Hoover 1985). People with disabilities are conservatively estimated to constitute ten percent or more of the world's population, and estimates have indicated that 13 percent of all travelers have some kind of disability (Durgin, Lindsay and Hamilton 1985). Furthermore, the number of disabled tourists appears to be increasing annually (Zywicki and Zywicki 1986). Yet, the dilemma of the disabled traveler rarely appears in tourism literature. The following indictment of the travel industry by Rehabilitation International (1979:1) summarizes this dilemma:

Essentially, the most difficult and pervasive existing barriers to disabled travelers are those which affect long-distance mobility and involve those travel services being offered to the public. There exists a vast worldwide "service complex" of businesses, organizations and facilities which is organized to offer transportation, entertainment, and a galaxy of support services to the general public. Neglecting the needs of the disabled traveler to a great extent, this service complex has become regimented, standardized and institutionalized to the point where people with problems of [disability] are excluded due to an overwhelming plethora of barriers.

Because of the number of people with disabilities who travel, plus those who would like to travel but do not, consideration should be given by the tourism industry to the "plethora of barriers" that exist for disabled persons. Such consideration not only makes sense psychologically and philosophically, but economically as well. Rehabilitation International (1979:6) emphasized that a "very important economically-related justification for barrier removal is the fact that disabled travelers tend to travel with friends or relatives to a greater extent than the general public, especially on

vacation, and that the entire group will be likely to use the equipment that the disabled member can use."

## BARRIERS TO LEISURE PARTICIPATION

The concept of barriers to leisure participation is multifaceted. Francken and van Raaij (1981), in their investigation of leisure satisfaction, dichotomized perceived barriers to leisure participation as either internal (e.g., capacities, abilities, knowledge, and interests) or external to the participant (e.g., lack of time or money, geographic distance, and lack of facilities). Iso-Ahola and Mannell (1985), however, used a three by two matrix to categorize leisure constraints. Along the horizontal axis, they placed three categories of constraints (social-personal, social-cultural, and physical); the vertical axis divided each of these categories according to the stability of each constraint source (variable vs. stable). Jackson and Searle (1985:696), listed six aspects of leisure behavior that have been identified as associated with the interrelated themes of nonparticipation, barriers to leisure participation, and barriers to activity enjoyment. These included:

- (1) non-participation because of a lack of interest;
- (2) non-participation because of the influence of internal barriers;
- (3) non-participation because of the influence of external barriers;
- (4) participants who wish but are unable to increase the frequency or intensity of their participation;
- (5) people who were formerly participants in an activity but who have ceased participating;
- (6) people who participate but are unable to achieve the full desired level of satisfaction or enjoyment.

From the above, as well as other discussions of barriers to leisure participation (McGuire 1984; Searle and Jackson 1985; Smith 1985), several important points emerge. First, barriers to leisure participation are dynamic in nature. Although some barriers appear relatively stable with respect to a given leisure behavior, their impacts vary from person to person, and from situation to situation. Secondly, barriers not only block participation, but they also can have a substantial inhibiting effect upon enjoyment during, and perhaps after, participation. Thirdly, although the locus of a specific barrier to leisure participation may be categorized as primarily internal or external to the individual, recognition must be given to the fact that some barriers are inexorably related to the interaction process between leisure participants and their social or physical environments. These "interactive" barriers are important to the present discussion because they frequently represent significant obstacles to leisure satisfaction among tourists who have disabilities. Finally, expanding upon one of Iso-Ahola and Mannell's (1985) points, barriers to leisure participation often result from internal or external deficits (i.e., lack of money, lack of equipment, etc.), but they may also result from something the person or environment has in abundance (i.e., social roles with associated norms, architectural obstacles, etc.)

In order to discuss barriers to leisure participation experienced by tourists (and potential tourists) with disabilities, some form of categorization is useful. Although categorization might mask important differences among and between barriers (Searle and Jackson 1985), the use of categories can

enhance an understanding of the nature of an individual barrier, as well as its interrelationships with other barriers. The following three categories were selected for use in this presentation: intrinsic barriers, environmental barriers, and interactive barriers. It should be stressed that the present discussion highlights some of the barriers that disproportionately affect tourist who have disabilities. No attempt is made to elucidate the many barriers that constrain leisure participation throughout the general population (i.e., lack of money, time constraints, social role responsibilities, etc.). For a more complete description of barriers that may have an impact upon the leisure experience of all tourists, the reader is referred to Jackson (1983), Jackson and Searle (1985), McGuire (1984), and Witt and Goodale (1981).

### INTRINSIC BARRIERS

Leisure participation among disabled individuals may be inhibited by barriers that are associated with each participant's own physical, psychological, or cognitive functioning level. Such barriers may be directly related to their specific disabilities, but they also may arise from other factors that are secondary to their medical diagnoses, such as parental over-protection or inadequate educational opportunities. Irrespective of the cause, however, the locus of an intrinsic barrier is primarily internal. The intrinsic barriers which may have a substantial impact upon the participation or enjoyment of any tourist with a disability include lack of knowledge, health-related problems, social ineffectiveness, and physical and psychological dependency.

#### *Lack of Knowledge*

Obviously, people who have cognitive disorders are limited in their ability to learn about leisure opportunities associated with tourism. All disabled tourists, however, may experience knowledge deficits that result from inadequate access to information about opportunities for tourism. Hutchison (1980), who conducted one of the few empirical investigations on barriers to participation experienced by people with disabilities, found "lack of awareness of rights and resources" to be the primary barrier to community leisure participation. Hutchison's study, which used the Barriers to Community Involvement (BTCI) instrument with 30 disabled subjects, did not specifically deal with tourist-related activities; however, the subjects who perceived themselves as lacking knowledge of local resources might logically be considered to be at least equally unaware of opportunities for tourism. Matthews (1980) found that not only the person with a disability, but also his or her care-giver (if needed) may lack information about leisure opportunities. Examining 36 female care-givers for mentally retarded children, Matthews (1980:49) found that the mothers and female guardians of children with mental retardation "demonstrated a lack of awareness of activities offered in their area." Furthermore, this lack of awareness was unrelated to socioeconomic status. With respect to travel-related information, Weiss (1986:xii) observed that "except for a miniscule number of agents and tour operators who have been specialists

in the field for a long time, there is little understanding or knowledge of the facilities that are available to [disabled tourists].” Lack of knowledge of leisure opportunities, including those related to tourism, obviously interferes with any individual’s ability to participate, but people with disabilities appear especially to lack access to information about leisure resources.

### *Health-Related Problems*

Most individuals who have disabilities lead relatively pain-free and illness-free lives; however, some health-related problems are associated with specific disabilities. Chronic pain and limited range of motion within affected joints, for example, are generally experienced by people who have rheumatoid arthritis. Gunn (1978:106) identified pain as a potential “block” to spontaneous play behavior for individuals with physical and mental disabilities, and the mobility and activity limitations imposed upon tourists with limited joint motion are extensive. Some disabilities have contraindications, or medical restrictions, that limit participation in popular tourist-related activities. One contraindication for some spinal cord injured individuals is prolonged exposure to unusually hot weather conditions. Depending upon the nature and location of their lesions, tourists with paraplegia and quadriplegia may not have the ability to perspire; thus, they cannot reduce their body temperatures in the same manner as nondisabled tourists. The limitations imposed by this health-related problem can be significant, particularly in light of the popularity of many warm-weather resorts.

### *Social Ineffectiveness*

Ineffective social skills have a profound effect upon any leisure experience which requires social interaction with other individuals. For many reasons, individuals with disabilities may be more likely to have deficits in social skills than their nondisabled peers (Peterson and Connolly 1978). To date, the evidence regarding the associated between disability and personality is equivocal (Wright 1983), but several factors could well contribute to social difficulties. Parental overprotection, segregated (disabled only) social experiences, and inadequate feedback about inappropriate behaviors during the developmental period are frequently encountered by disabled individuals, and these factors have been hypothesized as determinants of social ineffectiveness (Kennedy et al 1987).

### *Physical and Psychological Dependency*

During the developmental period, most people gradually progress from complete dependence upon their primary care-givers to a point of relative independence in their physical and psychological functioning. For many people with disabilities, however, this progression is stunted before they reach their full potential for independent functioning. The limitations imposed by some severe disabilities, for example, result in physical dependence upon others for mobility and performance of many activities of daily living. For people with severe disabilities, participation in tourism may

only be possible with the assistance of an aide or companion. As Carpenter (1977:110) poignantly described, "With the severely handicapped person, such as I, a person is also needed who is able and willing to put on his jacket, help him to the washroom and so on."

Even more debilitating than physical dependence, however, can be the psychological dependence that results from what Finkelstein (1980:8) has termed "a socially determined disability relationship." This paradoxical situation may affect any disabled individual irrespective of his or her severity of disability. It is characterized by well-meaning attempts of parents and rehabilitation professionals to enable the disabled person to achieve an independent lifestyle; however, the result is that the "helpers" reinforce the disabled individual's dependency upon their assistance to solve physical and social problems. Kennedy et al (1987:72) describe the impact of psychological dependency and its interrelationship with other barriers to participation. They wrote:

When psychological dependency occurs, the disabled person's capacity for personal growth and self-development is severely limited. Many of the barriers that are faced by people with disabilities require personal initiative, creative thought, risk taking, and perseverance in action. These qualities do not develop fully in an atmosphere of psychological dependency.

Obviously, psychological dependency can severely restrict the leisure functioning of an individual who has a disability, particularly with respect to leisure behavior requiring travel away from home. If a disabled person is to experience leisure as a tourist, he or she must not only compensate for physical deficits, but also overcome the potentially debilitating effects of maladaptive social relationships with care-givers and service providers.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

Environmental barriers are leisure-inhibiting factors that are predominantly external to the tourist with a disability. Unlike intrinsic barriers, these barriers are imposed upon disabled tourists by social or physical conditions. The environmental barriers to participation often faced by disabled individuals include attitudinal barriers, architectural barriers, ecological barriers, transportation barriers, and rules and regulation barriers.

### *Attitudinal Barriers*

According to Pearce (1982:133), nondisabled tourists have frequently reported experiences that "demonstrate alienation and feelings of being an outsider in the midst of others." Unfortunately, prevailing societal attitudes toward people with disabilities may compound this situation for the disabled tourist. Although attitudes are not necessarily manifested in overt behavior toward the attitude object (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), there is ample evidence that the behavior of many nondisabled people demonstrates negative public attitudes toward disabled individuals (Goffman 1963; Kennedy et al 1987; Siller, Chipman, Ferguson and Vann

1967; Wright 1983). In a study examining social stigma as a barrier to participation, West (1984) conducted in-depth interviews with 162 disabled individuals. His results revealed that 51.9% of respondents reported experiencing some form of negative response, including teasing and lack of respect, from nondisabled individuals. Furthermore, approximately one-half of those experiencing these negative attitudes in community parks reduced the number of subsequent visits to the parks. More subtle, but no less problematic, is the avoidance behavior exhibited by nondisabled people when confronted by a person with a visible disability (Langer, Fiske, Taylor and Chanowitz 1976).

Attitudinal barriers also encompass paternalistic attitudes that may arise from pity or from a nondisabled person's desire to demonstrate positive feelings toward people with disabilities. As noted by Kennedy et al (1987:75), paternalistic attitudes result in solicitous behaviors such as giving excessive praise for accomplishments or providing unneeded physical assistance. Such behaviors convey the inaccurate message "that people with disabilities lack competence, maturity, and the capacity for independence."

#### *Architectural Barriers*

Park (1977:129) observed that "a major reason many handicapped persons do not participate in existing recreation programs is simply that facilities are not physically accessible and barrier-free." Architectural barriers are manmade obstacles (including the absence of adaptations) in the physical environment that systematically deprive many disabled tourists not only of mobility, but also the capacity to use existing resources. It has been estimated that over 21 million people in the United States alone are inconvenienced by such barriers (Socio-Technological Instrumental Modules Project 1978). While efforts to reduce architectural barriers have recently improved accessibility throughout the world, there are still many areas and attractions that are almost totally inaccessible to the tourist who uses a wheelchair (or another type of mobility aid).

#### *Ecological Barriers*

Physical obstacles, including inclement weather conditions, that occur in the natural environment have been termed ecological barriers (Smith 1985). Hills, sand, trees, wind, and the like can interfere with mobility and, thus, the leisure experience of a disabled tourist. Careful advance planning may minimize the impacts of ecological barriers, but some natural obstacles are virtually impossible to overcome by an unassisted person who has a disability. Although they may affect everyone to some extent, ecological barriers are especially salient to the disabled tourist because the popularity of many tourist locations is based upon their ecological uniqueness—a uniqueness that often results in lack of access for disabled people.

#### *Transportation Barriers*

The lack of available and accessible transportation has been identified as one of the major obstacles to providing community leisure services to

people with disabilities (Pomeroy 1974; Vaughan and Winslow 1979). This problem is even more acute for the disabled tourist because tourism, by definition, requires travel that often depends upon an interconnected system of transportation modes (Hunt 1986:32). Any portion of the "vast infrastructure critical to the movement of people" may be unavailable for use by a disabled tourist, thus inhibiting his or her leisure experience. The pervasiveness of transportation barriers in the United States was cited by the American Bar Association (1979:1):

It is estimated that with the present transportation system [disabled people] travel about half as much as the rest of the population, with the largest difference being in social/recreational, work and shopping excursions. If an accessible transportation system were available the number of trips made by disabled persons would increase significantly.

Bowe (1978) has criticized the United States government for its failure to develop a national policy on transportation for disabled persons. Without a multinational effort toward this end, however, it appears that transportation barriers will continue to impede the mobility and, thus, the leisure experience of disabled tourists.

#### *Rules and Regulations Barriers*

Rules and regulations are a necessary part of any social order, but they sometimes needlessly inhibit the leisure participation of disabled individuals. Many passenger airlines, for example, have at various times during the past decade enforced rules that were clearly discriminatory against disabled travelers. Even with the passage of the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986, some airlines in the United States have continued to enforce discriminatory rules and regulations (Capozzi 1987). One recent development has been the enforcement by some carriers of rules prohibiting transport of wet-cell electric batteries for electric-powered wheelchairs, even if the batteries are packaged in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations. Such arbitrary rule enforcement can severely limit the travel options of a physically disabled tourist.

Sygal (1985:50), a highly independent wheelchair user, provided another example of the inconvenience that disabled tourists can experience, even after they reach their destinations. She described the excellent architectural accessibility at England's National Theatre, but then stated, "Would you believe they refused to sell us two 'wheelchair seats' because we didn't have an able-bodied chaperon." Incidents such as these confirm that sensible enforcement of equitable rules and regulations are needed if disabled tourists are to have equal access to leisure opportunities.

#### INTERACTIVE BARRIERS

Some barriers cannot be posited primarily within the individual nor can they be considered to be mainly located in the person's milieu. Rather, consideration of these interactive barriers requires attention to the individual's behavior in relation to existing environmental conditions. The primary interactive barriers that confront tourists with disabilities are skill-challenge incongruities and communication barriers.

### *Skill-Challenge Incongruities*

Most categorizations of barriers have considered lack of skill (or ability) to be an internal constraint to leisure behavior (Francken and van Raaij 1981; Iso-Ahola and Mannell 1985). Although such classification may be appropriate in some instances, more frequently the person's level of skill must be considered concurrently with the demand characteristics of the activity. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) has illustrated this point in a theoretical model of "flow" that incorporates both the person's perceived skill level and the challenges of the specific activity. Enjoyment of an intrinsically motivated (autotelic) activity, according to Csikszentmihalyi's (1975:50) construct, can occur when the activity "provides optimal challenges in relation to the actor's skills." A disabled tourist may have limited skill levels in certain activities due to the presence of a disability, but these limitations are not, within themselves, barriers to leisure participation. Low skill levels do not prevent enjoyment, providing the requirements of an activity are minimal and, thus, congruent with the limited capabilities of the participant. If the tourist with a disability perceives the challenge of a given activity as exceeding his or her skill level, however, worry or anxiety may block participation or prevent an enjoyable experience. Conversely, insufficient challenge may constrain participation due to feelings of boredom.

### *Communication Barriers*

Furnham (1984:49) emphasized the importance of the communication process in tourism with the following statement:

A consistent theme running through the literature on culture shock is communication difficulties. This nearly always involves language difficulties, as the tourist or sojourner is able to speak (or write or read) little or nothing of the host culture's language. However, even when the tourist or sojourner is able to speak the foreign language, albeit not perfectly, communication difficulties still arise. It has been argued that these difficulties arise as a function of cross-cultural and cross-national differences in social skills.

Many tourists with disabilities, whether traveling abroad or in their own countries, experience similar communication difficulties. These difficulties may arise from cognitive, speech, or hearing disorders, or they too may be associated with social skill differences. Regardless of their origin, however, communication barriers are rarely one-sided. Communication is a reciprocal process that requires active participation by both the message sender and the message receiver. Kennedy et al (1987:80) noted that a disabled person's expressive difficulties are often accompanied by receptive blocks on the part of the nondisabled individual. They observed that "an individual with speech difficulties may find it impossible to pronounce words clearly . . . the listener, however, may not concentrate on what is said or take the time to ask for unclear words to be repeated." Further emphasizing the reciprocal nature of communication, Kennedy et al (1987:81) concluded that a two-way dialogue needs to exist between disabled and nondisabled individuals or "there is little hope of overcoming the many barriers to [leisure] participation."

## IMPLICATIONS FOR LEISURE

The many intrinsic, environmental, and interactive barriers that confront disabled tourists interact to restrict significantly their opportunities for leisure experiences. From the outset, these barriers affect the number and nature of activity options that are available to the tourist with a disability. Thus, barriers to participation severely threaten the disabled tourist's perceptions of freedom, including both "decision" and "outcome" freedom (Iso-Ahola 1980). Although the perception of freedom alone does not assure leisure (Godbey 1985), the experience of freedom is an essential aspect of the leisure phenomenon (Harper 1986; Iso-Ahola 1980). To the extent that barriers reduce perceived freedom, they also diminish the potential for leisure among disabled tourists.

Not only do barriers to participation limit perception of freedom for disabled tourists, but specific barriers may further restrict the tourist's feelings of personal control and competence. If efforts to overcome environmental barriers are unsuccessful, or the challenges of an activity exceed perceived skill levels, the tourist with a disability may attribute lack of success to his or her own incompetence. People strive for feelings of personal control over their own behavior and the environment (de Charms 1968); thus, barriers that inhibit a tourist's feelings of personal control and competence may restrict participation or, at the very least, significantly reduce the satisfaction derived from the experience. Iso-Ahola (1980:332), applying concepts from attribution theory and Seligman's (1975) theory of "learned helplessness," noted that feelings of incompetence in leisure activities may across time "result in a stable inference of generalized helplessness, meaning that the person's leisure participation diminishes drastically because he does not believe in his personal capacity to participate successfully in any leisure activities." Because barriers to participation disproportionately affect tourists with disabilities, the potential for a disabled traveler to experience "generalized helplessness" would appear to be considerably greater than that of the nondisabled tourist.

Even if a disabled tourist does not experience feelings of helplessness, there are several reasons to hypothesize that the leisure satisfaction he or she derives from tourism may be lower than those of other tourists. First, the number and nature of perceived barriers to participation have been demonstrated to be negatively related to leisure satisfaction. Francken and van Raaij (1981), in their study of 176 households, found that subjects with high leisure satisfaction perceived themselves as having fewer barriers to participation than subjects in either the low or middle satisfaction group. Furthermore, the low satisfaction group was inclined to identify internal (intrinsic) barriers as constraints to leisure, whereas subjects in the middle satisfaction group were more likely to perceive themselves as constrained by external (environmental) barriers. Since tourists with disabilities are confronted by more intrinsic and environmental barriers than nondisabled tourists, they might be expected to experience less leisure satisfaction from tourism than their nondisabled counterparts.

A second reason that disabled tourists may experience reduced levels of satisfaction is related to the dialectic nature of tourism motivation. As noted by Iso-Ahola (1982:261), tourism "provides an outlet for avoiding something *and* for simultaneously seeking something." Some disabled tourists, however, may find themselves in a "Catch-22" situation with

respect to their ability to satisfy the motivation to escape from everyday problems through travel. Simply stated, the avoidance component of motivation for some disabled tourists may include the need to escape temporarily from the many environmental and interactive barriers that they experience in everyday life. Upon arrival at their destinations, however, those individuals often find themselves confronted by many of the *same* barriers that typify their lives at home. Irrespective of the destination's capacity to offer new and exciting experiences (components they are seeking), the disabled tourist's leisure satisfaction may be diminished by familiar environmental and interactive barriers (components they hoped to avoid).

Ironically, a second "Catch 22" situation may develop from efforts to make a tourist attraction architecturally and ecologically barrier-free. Without careful planning, the physical changes that provide access to disabled tourists may reduce the authenticity of the tourist environment. Authenticity has been suggested as a critical factor in visitor satisfaction (MacCannell 1976; Pearce 1982). Therefore, the potential exists for increases in accessibility to be accompanied by decreases in the leisure satisfaction of tourists, including disabled tourists. Zywicki and Zywicki (1986:5), however, noted that recent modifications at historic Williamsburg, Virginia, illustrate that accessibility is not, *per se*, incompatible with authenticity. They credited a disabled projects coordinator for "continually making buildings accessible through portable ramps, audiovisual presentations and other modifications."

The multifaceted nature of tourism may also contribute to reduced levels of satisfaction among disabled travelers because some important aspects of the overall experience may be inaccessible to people with disabilities. Access to facilities has been demonstrated to be an important variable in leisure participation among the general population (McClaskie, Napier and Christensen 1986; Rosma and Hoffman 1980), and environmental barriers have been reported to limit access to leisure facilities and experiences (Hutchison 1980; Kennedy et al 1987). Opportunities that provide access only to nondisabled tourists are "breeding grounds" for attributions of inequality, which have been postulated as important determinants of leisure dissatisfaction (Francken and van Raaij 1981).

Finally, an additional impact of barriers to participation may be to relegate many disabled travelers to "special" package tours designed exclusively for disabled tourists and their companions. Tours such as these might offer some of the same outcomes attributed to conventional group tours (Schuchat 1983), but they severely limit the opportunities for disabled individuals to choose from among the many social roles (Pearce 1982) associated with tourism. Thus, any satisfaction derived from "special" tours may, in the final analysis, be ephemeral because these tours reinforce the disabled individual's segregation from the mainstream of society.

## CONCLUSION

When one examines the barriers to participation experienced by disabled tourists, the emerging image is of a network of interrelated forces that limit the individual's opportunities to experience leisure. Intrinsic,

environmental, and interactive barriers not only restrict the disabled tourist's activity options, but they undermine critical components of leisure, including perceptions of freedom and personal causation. The unique impacts of barriers upon disabled tourists await empirical investigation, but it is hypothesized that these barriers may reduce the amount of leisure satisfaction derived from tourism. One caveat should be added, however. Any examination, including the present one, of barriers to participation for tourists with disabilities has an inherent risk. It may foster a distorted view of disabled tourists as passive individuals who have vastly different motivations for travel than their nondisabled peers. Rather, the desire among disabled people for travel opportunities that are unencumbered by needless barriers underscores their normality. As Nugent (1969:20-21) emphasized:

Let us recognize that, individually and collectively, [disabled people] have the same aspirations, interests, talents and, in most cases, the same skills as all people. They have the same basic social-psychological needs and would like to travel the same avenues that you and I have been privileged to travel in fulfillment of these needs. It is the fault of our society as a whole . . . that these individuals have not been privileged to travel these avenues. It is not the fault of the disability or the individual with the disability.

Reducing barriers to participation, therefore, is the responsibility of everyone involved in the tourism industry. The end result will not only be increased leisure satisfaction for disabled tourists, but as noted by Albert (1982:19), the greater emergence and visibility of tourists with disabilities "will have an educative effect upon every dimension of society." □ □

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