

Ethnicity as a Construct in Leisure Research: A Rejoinder to Gobster

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Gobster addresses several issues in our paper. These include, first, a suggestion that the measure of cultural values that we used is not appropriate for understanding possible variations in racial and ethnic patterns of outdoor leisure preferences and behavior. He claims, as well, that we limit our use of ethnicity to alleged cultural differences among groups and, specifically, to cultural values, unlike what most leisure researchers have done. Second, Gobster questions our concern with the use of common racial and ethnic labels because these are part and parcel of the way in which people look at others. Third, grouping people by racial and ethnic labels has often contributed to social justice. Fourth, ethnic groups in the U.S. are growing and what may have been small differences between groups in the past may be magnified in the future due to these demographic shifts. Fifth, research is constrained by resources that limit sampling designs and, therefore, collapsing smaller ethnic and/or racial groups into larger ones may be required for statistical comparisons of adequate power to be made. Sixth, Gobster expresses concern over our use of cultural consensus analysis, a single method, in claiming that ethnicity may not be a useful concept. This naturally segues to concern over the culture construct itself and its worth in addressing al-

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Author note: We wish to express our sincere thanks to David Scott, editor of the *Journal of Leisure Research*, for selecting our manuscript, *Ethnicity as a variable in leisure research*, for open peer commentary. We also wish to thank the three anonymous reviewers who made important contributions to the development of the paper. Finally, we express our deepest appreciation to Paul Gobster for his keen observations of both the strengths and weaknesses of our paper and his incisive comments on them. We feel that open peer commentaries on research articles, along with rejoinders from the authors, provide splendid opportunities for the debate that often seems lacking in leisure research.

leged differences in the leisure behavior of nominal racial and ethnic groups. Finally, Gobster mentions the problem with (the low amount of) variance accounted for in studies of leisure participation, a concern that we expressed in our paper. We will deal with each of these issues in turn.

The Utility of Cultural Values in Assessing Behavior

Gobster expresses concern over our use of Hofstede's (1980) measure of cultural values, given that it was developed in a business setting, rather than in recreation. Moreover, he wonders why we would use such an abstract construct—cultural values—to try to understand ethnic similarities and differences in an outdoor recreation context. Both of these are legitimate concerns.

Our paper is part of a larger study based on a cultural approach, both in terms of methods and variable conceptualization, in the attempt to understand possible ethnic group differences in customer satisfaction in an outdoor recreation context. Some of the research that Gobster and we review seems to show differences in recreational preferences and behaviors among various ethnic and racial groups. But, to what can we attribute these differences? What *should* we measure in order to determine why they occur?

People apparently differ in terms of their leisure choices and behaviors based on individual differences, both in terms of personality and personality-like dimensions. But where does being a member of an ethnic or racial group fit? Do members of such groups differ in personality, as once claimed by members of the old, and now largely defunct, "culture and personality" school (e.g., Benedict, 1934; Kardiner, 1939), and then select different leisure pursuits on that basis? Or, do members of different ethnic and/or racial groups vary in their leisure preferences and behaviors due to different constraints and affordances, as illustrated in numerous studies (e.g., Philipp, 1995; Shinew, Floyd, & Parry, 2004; Stodolska, 1998)? If so, what is the content of these constraints and affordances? Woodard (1988), for example, found that African-Americans were constrained by the fear of racial prejudice and discrimination and therefore chose activities that allow them to avoid prejudice and discrimination. According to Tsai and Coleman (1999) Chinese-Americans' leisure is limited by "resource constraints, interpersonal constraints, access constraints, affective constraints, social-cultural constraints, and physiological constraints" (p. 255). Philipp found African-Americans to be less comfortable in certain activities, such as golf, skiing, and hunting, than white Americans. Other studies could be cited but the point is that racial and ethnic groups appear to be constrained in leisure by numerous factors, many of which appear to be both (1) learned and (2) shared.

Being learned and shared are two of the defining characteristics of culture. But, as a constraining and affording factor in leisure, culture has been discussed substantially less than many other constraints, although it is often invoked implicitly (Chick & Dong, 2005). A significant problem with the use

of culture as an explanation for leisure constraints or affordances is that those who use the concept almost never define it. Indeed, it is defined and used differently in different fields of study (e.g., anthropology, cultural sociology, cultural studies, cultural history) and by different researchers in those fields. Anthropologists A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn catalogued more than 160 definitions in 1952 and far more have appeared since then. Practitioners in cultural sociology, culture history, and cultural studies often view culture as practice; that is, as the structure, and, sometimes, the results, of social action, or take a performative perspective wherein culture is seen as a set of tools that allow social actions to take place (Sewell, 1999). Unfortunately, these approaches fail to make clear how culture influences behavior since they often begin with the behavior itself. We are then left with the circular—and banal—explanation that people behave the way they do because that is the way they behave.

In our study, we took culture to be what presumably differs between ethnic groups and, therefore, what may lead to different perceptions of service quality. We chose to use a cognitive definition of culture developed by Ward Goodenough in 1957 but endorsed since then by many other scientifically oriented anthropologists. Boyd and Richerson (2005) provide a recent and concise version of this sort of definition: "Culture is information capable of affecting individuals' behavior that they acquire from other members of their species through teaching, imitation, and other forms of social transmission" (p. 5). So, culture is information that is learned from others, and therefore shared, and can affect behavior. For Goodenough (1957), culture is the information that people must know in order to behave appropriately in the groups of which they are members.

But, what *kind* of information is this? Many anthropologists regard culture to be composed of *beliefs* and *values*, the former conventionally concerned with the nature of reality and the latter with moral judgments about it (Swartz, 2001). Beliefs need not be true to be believed (e.g., that the Earth is flat or that the moon is made of green cheese). Sometimes knowledge is included as a component of culture but, given its transient nature, knowledge can usually be thought of as a type of belief. Moreover, from a psychological perspective, all knowledge is ultimately subjective. People act on what they believe to be true, whether or not those beliefs conform to some external, objective reality.

Values, as a component of culture, are one of several hypothetical constructs that allegedly dispose individuals to behave in particular ways. Attitudes, preferences, motives, and intentions are other examples of this class of psychological constructs that ground most theories of action (see, e.g., Ajzen, 2006; Kluckhohn, 1951). Cultural values are presumably acquired through enculturation and are shared widely within cultural groups. Hofstede's (1980) measure of cultural values is probably the most widely used such instrument in social research but, as Gobster notes, Hofstede developed his conceptualization of values as well as his instrument in a business context. Hofstede's measure remains widely used in business although others, such

as Kahle's (1999) List of Values (LOV) and the Schwartz Value Survey (Schwartz, 1992), have made inroads in business, psychology, and social psychology.

What are Values?

Rokeach (1973) defined values as personally or socially preferred modes of "conduct or end states of existence" (p. 5). Similarly, Schwartz views them as "guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity" (1994, p. 21). Some researchers treat values as something held by societies or cultures (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Cross & Madson, 1997), including subgroups such as racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Oyserman & Markus, 1993), while others view values as individually held phenomena (e.g., Mulvey, Olson, & Celsi, 1994; Klenosky, Gengler, & Mulvey, 1993).

One of the best studied of several purported culture-level dimensions of values is individualism-collectivism (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994; Triandis, 1993). Hofstede (1980) defined individualism as the preference to favor individual needs above those of the group while collectivism is the tendency to do the opposite. Others have redefined the construct in such a way that individuals can be viewed as high or low on either rather than necessarily higher on one than the other (e.g., Gaines, *et al.* 1997). The presumption is that individuals from cultural groups more strongly inculcated with individualistic values (e.g., North Americans) behave differently in some circumstances than those more strongly inculcated with collectivistic values (e.g., East Asians).

So, it seems to make sense to measure cultural values, especially those thought to be widely shared within cultural groups, in the effort to explain ethnic similarities or differences with respect to perceptions of the world, including service quality in an outdoor recreation setting. Those who advocate the importance of values argue that they influence individual perceptions and interpretations of events and situations and the importance attributed to them. In turn, these interpretations, based on value priorities, allegedly affect how individuals will behave in various circumstances (Schwartz, 1996). But, these claims have rarely been tested empirically and, when they have, research has shown values to be relatively poor direct indicators of behavior (e.g., Hechter, Kim, & Baer, 2005). We will return to this below.

What is Ethnicity?

We chose to define ethnic groups as being culture-based entities. This is not unprecedented as Barth (1969) claimed that ethnic groups share "fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms" (p. 10). Glaser and Moynihan (1975) defined an ethnic group as one "with a common cultural tradition and sense of identity" (p. 1) while Eipper (1983) claimed that, for most students of ethnicity, "the term ethnic group is syn-

onymous with cultural group; ethnic means cultural; ethnicity is culture" (p. 437). Definitions involving culture by Nagel (1994), Sasidharan (2002), and Van den Berghe (1976) are given in our article. While Barth (1969) holds that boundaries are what define ethnic groups, not the culture that they enclose, it is difficult to see how boundaries, by themselves, or even the sense of identity based on being a member of a bounded group, would lead members of groups to behave in distinctive ways.

Gobster claims that most leisure researchers do not base their work on culture or cultural values when examining alleged ethnic differences in leisure preferences or behavior or, if they do, their "take" differs from ours. Perhaps so, but it seems to us that it is then their duty to inform readers what, if not cultural values, provides the basis for their assumption that ethnic groups will behave differently and why it is justifiable. After all, if two nominal ethnic groups are distinguished by language, for example (e.g., Shaull & Gramann, 1998), then what is it that should lead them to behave differently? Their languages? We seriously doubt that this is what researchers have in mind, either. All that we are asking is that researchers make it clear exactly what they posit as a cause of behavior.

Given these considerations, it seems reasonable to attempt to differentiate nominal ethnic groups on the basis of culture and, therefore, on values, one of the two commonly cited components of culture. While Hofstede's (1980) measure of cultural values is not unchallenged (see the literature review in our article), it is very commonly used and has been validated numerous times, both in international business research and elsewhere.

The Merits of Ethnicity as a Construct: Carving Nature at its Joints

In *Phaedrus* (trans. R. Hackforth, 1952), Plato advocated dividing nature at "objective articulations," or, more poetically, "carving nature at its joints," as an aid to understanding. The problem is that it is not always obvious where the "objective articulations," or "joints," are or even the sense in which they might be objective. Do ethnic or racial groups represent divisions at objective articulations? Does ethnicity or race offer a way to carve nature at its joints? Or, are such terms merely convenient social constructions that do not represent reality in any scientifically meaningful way? One reason to believe that they do not is illustrated by the fact that ethnic and racial labels are constantly changing or being changed. In 1977, for example, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) established four race categories, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, and White, as well as two categories of ethnicity, Hispanic origin and Not of Hispanic origin, for use in federal reporting. In 1997, the OMB issued new standards. The minimum racial categories now include American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. An "Other Race" category was included in the 2000 Census. Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino remained the minimal categories for ethnicity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). These categories reflect changing political priorities, not changes in reality.

In his support of continued leisure research using ethnicity and race as constructs, Gobster describes how various groups have been victimized by other, more powerful, groups and how ethnic and racial classifications have been used to promote equal justice in recreational and other settings. He also observes that members of society continue to think about both themselves and others in terms of commonly used ethnic and racial categories. Finally, Gobster notes that ethnic groups are growing in size and influence in the U.S. and, as such, they will significantly affect the customer base for recreation services in the future. While we agree with his second and third points, Gobster's claim that ethnic and racial classifications promote social justice is open to debate. For much of U.S. history, racial and ethnic classifications have been used to do exactly the opposite. As we noted in our article, the legal roots of ethnicity date to the first U.S. Census in 1790 wherein slaves were counted as three fifths of a person so that congressional "overrepresentation" from slave states could be avoided, to the 1850 Census that asked if people's parents were native or foreign born, and to the 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868, that included the "equal protection clause."

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first U.S. immigration law directed at a specific ethnic group. It suspended immigration from China for ten years and subsequent congressional actions prevented Chinese immigration until passage of the Magnusen Act of 1943 permitted a national quota of 105. Public opposition to the increased post-World War I flow of immigration from southern and eastern Europe culminated in the Quota Act of 1921. The even more restrictive Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 limited annual immigration to the U.S. to 165,000. The act imposed quotas from other countries based on the percentage of each nationality in the U.S. according to the 1890 census. Since the majority of southern and eastern European immigration occurred after 1890, the act served to limit immigration from those areas. For example, Italian immigration averaged about 200,000 per year for the first decade of the 20th century but the Act imposed a quota of 3,845 per year. In contrast, the quota for Germany was 51,227 (History Matters, 2007). The trend continues as the U.S. administration and Congress are currently under pressure to limit, and to enforce that limit, on immigration from Mexico and other Latin American countries.

Ethnic Groups as Scientific versus Political Categories

Our question is not whether ethnic and racial categorization systems have been, or should be, used politically, whether they have become part of the folk lexicon, or whether they engender particular ways in which people think about themselves or others. Our question is whether ethnic and racial labels should be uncritically accepted as legitimate scientific categories that have boundaries and/or content that distinguishes usefully among differently labeled groups. As we noted in our article, sometimes several cultural groups are gathered into one, as when individuals from various Asian countries who may speak different languages and maintain very different traditions, are described as "Asian." These groups are then assumed to have

some commonality. However, these commonalities are more about geography than culture, cognition, or behavior (but see Nisbett, 2003). They also seem to have a lot to do with characterizing groups of people as members of an exotic "other." Two centuries ago, "the Orient" was a very big place full of folks who often looked and behaved quite strangely (from the European perspective) but that certainly did not make them all the same. Simply put, nominal ethnicity and culture are not the same.

Moreover, the history of science does not auger well for the use of "common sense" or folk categories for research purposes. The records of physical science and social science are littered with terms and categorization systems that ultimately proved to be of no value, or worse, to have hindered research. We would not have gotten very far in physics, for example, if Aristotle's classification of substances into earth, air, fire, water, and ether had held fast. Similarly, some philosophers of science (e.g., McIntyre, 1996; Rosenberg, 1988) claim that insistence on using folk terminologies, such as attitudes, beliefs, and intentions, to explain human agency is one of the primary reasons why the social sciences have failed to develop causal laws of behavior or even to establish regularities in human behavior. They therefore advocate "redescription" of the processes that lead to behavior. McIntyre (1996) cites Festinger's (1957) notion of "cognitive dissonance," the idea that we attempt to establish order and harmony in our cognitive processes as we attempt to make sense of the world around us, as an example of redescription.

That all research is the victim of limited resources does not seem to be a legitimate reason for failure to critically examine our units of analysis, either. The lack of resources to get adequate samples does not justify the artificial combination of groups that we know to be different in many ways, such as Vietnamese and Koreans or Brazilians and Mexicans, into "Asian" or "Latin American," and then assume that they are identical for research purposes. Brubaker (2004) describes this as "groupism;" that is, "the tendency to treat ethnic groups, nations, and races as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed . . . the tendency to reify such groups, speaking of . . . Blacks, Whites, Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans in the United States as if they were internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes." (p. 8). Many years ago Alfred North Whitehead (1929) cautioned to beware of "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (p. 11); that is, the assumption that the way we categorize things in thought or language actually coincides with the nature of reality.

Cultural Consensus Analysis as Theory and Method

Gobster observes correctly that, even among anthropologists, there are those who have criticized cultural consensus as a theory and as a method. As theory, cultural consensus relies, as we have, on a cognitive view of culture; that is, culture is something that is (a) in the minds of people, (b) socially

transmitted and (c) shared. There are, of course, scores of other definitions of culture, many of which claim that culture has either behavioral or material components (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Sewell, 1999). Proponents of these definitions, while they rarely have a genuine theory of culture themselves, would likely disagree with at least parts of cultural consensus theory. As Gobster and we, in our article, note, Aunger (1999) is prominent among these. However, Aunger's argument seems to be based, first, on a misinterpretation of cultural consensus theory and analysis and, second, on the advocacy of an alternative view of the nature of culture.

Aunger's (1999) basic claim is that consensus theory, and consensus analysis, is "idealistic" in the sense that it posits on a single "idealized" cultural truth and that cultural systems necessarily involve consensus around that ideal. He prefers, for his definition of culture, a version that privileges the idea that culture is something that is learned from others rather than something that is shared. For Aunger, anything not learned from others is therefore not cultural. However, Romney (1999) points out in his rejoinder to Aunger that consensus theory and consensus analysis have no bones to pick with culture as a socially transmitted phenomenon. Shared information, however imperfectly, in a group could only be innate, the result of extensive, and parallel, trial-and-error learning, or socially transmitted and acquired. While some social and behavioral scientists may still regard humans as blank slates (Pinker, 2002), most acknowledge that some of the information we possess is innate. However, the innate portion is so small that it could not account for culture in all its variants, although the *capacity* for culture, as for language, appears to be innate. Trial-and-error learning is far too expensive in terms of time and effort to account for much of our knowledge (van Schaik & van Duijnhoven, 2004). Hence, for cultural consensus theory, cultural information is clearly regarded as socially transmitted. Aunger's claim that a consensus theory of culture eschews the social transmission of information is a *non sequitur*.

Aunger (1999, 2001) offers an alternative to consensus, or the sharedness of culture, a perspective he terms "realism." For Aunger (1999), "... if a belief is learned from others, then it is cultural, if it is invented or inferred from individual experience, it is not ..." (p. S99). Moreover, Aunger (1999) prefers an approach sometimes called "cultural epidemiology," (p. S100). The "fundamental premise of cultural epidemiology is that culture consists of meaningful units of information which are replicated during transmission between individual minds" (p. S100). This makes cultural transmission accountable to a Darwinian perspective and Aunger (2002) favors the "meme," a hypothetical unit of culture originally described by Dawkins (1976) as the unit of transmission. Romney and Moore (2001) strongly criticized the meme, claiming it to be useless as a unit of culture since, unlike the gene, it has no demonstrable internal structure that permits the development of any typology of such structures. After an initial flurry of interest and activity in the late 1990s and early 2000s (e.g., Blackmore, 1999; Brodie,

1996; Aunger, 2002; Distin, 2004), meme theorists have yet to offer any testable hypotheses and the e-journal, the *Journal of Mimetics*, launched in 1997, ceased publication in 2005.

If the goal of social science is to determine the causes and consequences of human actions, as claimed by many philosophers of social science (e.g., Rosenberg, 1988; McIntyre, 1996), then this is a standard that we might apply to cultural consensus theory and analysis. Garry Chick, first author of this rejoinder, studied the variation in knowledge and behavior with respect to a community festival system in central Mexico and, in 1981, published a paper wherein he conducted what could be regarded as an immediate precursor to consensus analysis. In that paper, Chick statistically determined, first, the degree to which a sample of informants agreed on the organizational structure of 20 ritual offices in the community festival system, second, the "culturally correct" (i.e., most agreed-upon) model of that structure, and, third, the degree to which each informant individually agreed with the model. These three measures are exactly what cultural consensus analysis provides. Romney, Weller, and Batchelder's (1986) subsequent achievement was to provide a theory of culture, as well as a far superior method of analysis, based on this idea of one "correct" model of cultural domains along with intra-cultural variation in knowledge about them.¹ When Chick (1981, 2002) compared the cultural model of the festival offices with actual behavior in office holding, determined from local church records, the correlation between culture and behavior was about .6, a relatively high value for social science research. Other researchers using cultural consensus theory and analysis have found similar values for the relationship between shared cultural models and behavior (e.g., Dressler, Dos Santos, & Campos Balieiro, 1996). There are no comparable results for meme-based cultural theories or analyses. While Aunger (1999) argues for an explanatory approach, he fails to produce one.

We are not claiming that cultural consensus theory and analysis are perfect; no theories or methods are and all must be used with caution. What we are claiming is that they provide a coherent, logically consistent model of culture, a source of testable hypotheses, and a method for analyzing culture that permits the comparison of consensus domains to records of human actions. There are difficulties and concerns with consensus theory and analysis (see, e.g., Handwerker, 2001, 2002; Weller, 1998) but they are not those described by Aunger (1999).

Statistical Significance and Statistical Power

One of our claims is that studies of ethnic groups and leisure preferences, choices, or behavior typically have little statistical power, even if they

¹We note that later work on the cultural consensus theme by Handwerker (2001, 2002) permits positing at least two, and possibly more, shared cultural models of particular domains, thus vitiating Aunger's complaint about one idealized version of cultural reality.

produce significant results. The American Psychological Association recently proposed guidelines for reporting quantitative results that go beyond p values to include more information about effect size indicators, such as mean differences, regression and correlation coefficients, odds ratios, and measures of variance accounted for (Wilkinson, 1999). We think that leisure researchers should adopt these standards, as many already have, so that others can make informed judgments about the strength of relationships found. The lack of statistical power characteristic of so many studies of the relationships between ethnicity, race, and leisure preferences, choices, and behaviors, even when they are statistically significant, may be a reflection of the lack of validity of ethnic and racial categories as constructs.

Summary

Our primary purpose in our paper was to question the efficacy of ethnicity as a variable in examining differences in leisure preferences, choices, and behaviors among groups of people. While we agree with Gobster on many of his points, we do not agree that the political or folk use of ethnic or racial classifications automatically qualify them as "natural kinds" that are useful as scientific categories. Indeed, as Gobster points out, research in genetics shows that within-race variation greatly exceeds between-race variation. In what sense, then, are races, and by extrapolation, ethnic groups, natural kinds that carve nature at its joints? That such groups have been given names does not guarantee that they are homogenous or functional as constructs. We need to look at within-group and between-group variance in our research and evaluate the implications of the results, not merely assume that the groups are invariably different because of their labels.

We are concerned with an additional issue, as well, that neither we discussed in our paper nor Gobster mentioned in his commentary. This is the distinction between methodological individualism and methodological holism. The former stance refers to the idea that groups are simply sums of their parts; that is, that group properties can be completely determined by studying characteristics of the individuals who comprise the groups. Methodological holism, on the other hand, is the position that groups may have emergent properties that cannot be determined by examining individual characteristics alone. Are we concerned, when discussing ethnic and/or racial groups and leisure, with the actions of individuals who we group together under some label or, alternatively, with the actions of groups that themselves constitute our unit of analysis? This is a major issue in the philosophy of social science (see, e.g., Kincaid, 1996) but one that seems to fly completely under the radar of leisure researchers. Is it possible that the variation sometimes observed among ethnic or racial groups with respect to leisure preferences, choices, or behaviors is an emergent property of the groups to which members self-ascribe and are ascribed by others rather than individual characteristics of members? We do not know the answer but believe the question to be worthy of investigation.

Finally, Rosenberg (1988) claims, ". . . in the social sciences, there has been almost universal agreement that the descriptive categories that common sense has used since the dawn of history are the right ones" (p. 11). We maintain that ethnic group labels are the kind of common sense descriptive categories to which Rosenberg refers. He goes on to say ". . . the social sciences are rather like chemistry before Lavoisier: trying to describe combustion in terms of 'phlogiston,' instead of 'oxygen,' and failing because there is no such thing" (p. 13). We are not claiming that ethnicity is unquestionably the phlogiston of leisure research or social science, more generally. We claim only that, first, whether ethnic groups are homogeneous, second, what they are homogeneous in terms of, and, third, how this homogeneity, or lack of it, affects leisure preferences, choices, and behaviors, are important empirical questions that leisure researchers have failed to ask.

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