

Active sport tourism: who participates?

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Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry. This paper reviews the status of active sport tourism in the US. Taking a lead from sport sociologists who have repeatedly shown that sport in the US is still stratified on the basis of gender, class, and race among others, this paper examines the notion that by its evasiveness active sport tourism has gained mass appeal. Who is the active sport tourist? Are men more likely to be active sport tourists than women? Has active sport tourism become democratized? Male, affluent, and college educated are characteristics that describe the typical active sport tourist. A discussion focusing on gender, race, and social class is used to examine the participation patterns in active sport tourism and to suggest future avenues for research.

Introduction

Tourism is the world's largest industry and is predicted to grow well into the 21st Century (World Travel and Tourism Council, 1993). Increasingly, the economic importance of tourism has been recognized by governments around the world. At the same time, the tourism industry has become more sophisticated in its development and marketing of new forms of tourism. Terms such as special interest tourism (Weiler and Hall, 1992), activity-centred tourism (Wahab, 1975; Gartner, 1996) and tourist roles (Cohen, 1972; Pearce, 1985; Yiannakis and Gibson, 1992) have been used to describe the increasingly diverse array of tourism types. Priestley (1995) notes that since the 1980s there has been a growing demand for active vacations. In fact, one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry is travel related to sport and physical activity. A recent survey commissioned by Marriott International (Elrick and Lavidge, Inc., 1994) found that while the traditional beach and sight-seeing vacations continue to predominate, 22% of those surveyed reported that opportunities to participate in sports were important when selecting a vacation. Redmond (1991) goes as far as to suggest that "a symbiotic relationship" now exists between sport and tourism' (p. 107). A very profitable relationship by all accounts, as Lavalley (1997) estimates that sport tourism is a 45 billion (US) dollar industry.

The term sport tourism has been adopted in recent years to describe sport-related leisure travel (Redmond, 1991; Kurtzman and Zauhar, 1995). Due to the recent conceptualization of sport tourism as a subject worthy of scholarly attention, research is still relatively scarce¹. Books and special sport tourism editions of various journals are forthcoming, but at present the amount of published material is limited. Moreover, few scholars have adopted a critical view of this emerging form of tourism. Among those who have De Knop

(1987) warns of the potential environmental and resident-tourist conflict as sport tourism grows in popularity. Whitson and Macintosh (1996) adopted a critical perspective in their analysis of the benefits for cities accruing from hosting hall mark sports events. However, as yet, few scholars have studied active sport tourists, that is people that choose to participate in their favourite sports while on vacation. The studies which have been done have principally concentrated on developing profiles of the typical sport tourist (Gibson and Yiannakis 1992, 1994; Priestley 1995; Richards 1996; Williams *et al.* 1996; Gibson *et al.* 1997). While there is a need to find out who these sport tourists are, these studies have not analysed the profile of the typical sport tourist within the context of social stratification. Are the patterns of inequality found in the institution of sport evident in active sport tourism? In the US, sport sociologists have long debunked the myth that sport is open to all. Nixon and Frey (1996) point out that increased participation rates in leisure sports and physical activities are often used as evidence that class and status distinctions have diminished. Golf in particular is one sport that is commonly used to support the notion that sport has become democratized. In actuality, Nixon and Frey report that not only is participation in golf still stratified on the basis of social class, gender, and race, with an overrepresentation of white, middle and upper class males, but the same pattern is pervasive in most other sports. Is the same participation profile emerging among active sport tourists?

This paper will review the status of active sport tourism in the United States. It will examine the notion that by its pervasiveness, active sport tourism has gained mass appeal. Some of the questions that will be addressed are: Who is an active sport tourist? Are men more likely to be active sport tourists than women? Has sport tourism become democratized? While some material will be drawn from research into active sport tourism (Gibson and Yiannakis, 1992, 1994; Gibson *et al.*, 1997, 1998; Yiannakis and Gibson, 1992), this paper will draw upon a wide range of secondary sources with the view that the ideas put forward will stimulate future research and debate as the study of sport tourism evolves. Tourism in this paper is conceptualized as a 'special form' of leisure. As such, studies from the field of leisure studies, sport sociology, and tourism will be used to support and explain some of the issues addressed in this essay.

What is sport tourism?

It is generally recognized that there are three broad categories of sport tourism: watching sporting events, visiting sports related attractions, and active participation. The first category, watching sporting events or Sports Event Tourism includes hallmark events (Hall, 1992a) such as the FIFA World Cup Football Championships, and the Olympic Games. World Cup '94 was actively promoted as a tourist attraction as were the Olympic Games held in Atlanta in 1996. During the buildup to World Cup '94, it was estimated that the event would attract 50 million foreign visitors to the US who would spend 100 billion (US) dollars (Gibson, 1995). Tournaments sponsored by the Professional Golf Association or the World Tennis Association are also part

of the spectator-centred sector of sport tourism. Similarly, tourism associated with professional sports teams and top US college basketball and football teams are part of this form of sport tourism.

The second type of sport tourism, Celebrity and Nostalgia Sport Tourism involves visiting famous sports-related attractions. Visits to the sports halls of fame such as the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, sports museums such as the NASCAR Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina, and famous sporting venues such as the Olympic Stadia in Barcelona and Atlanta fall into this category. Another form of Celebrity and Nostalgia Sport Tourism that has emerged in recent years is meeting famous sports personalities in a vacation context. The cruise industry has been very adept in this area. Sports theme cruises such as Norwegian Cruise Lines 'Pro-am Golf Cruise,' or the 'NBA Basketball Cruise,' arrange for passengers to meet personalities from their respective sports while on board ship.

Active participation or Active Sport Tourism is the third category of sport tourism. This is comprised of individuals who travel to participate in golf,² skiing, and tennis in particular, although other sports such as fishing, mountain biking, scuba diving are popular in the US. Hall (1992b) further subdivides this type of sport tourist into 'Activity Participants' who engage in sport related travel as a form of leisure, and 'Hobbyists' who are amateur 'players' who travel to take part in competitions in their chosen sports. In this paper the 'Activity Participants,' or what will be called the active sport tourist will be the focus.

The rise of opportunities for the active sport tourist

Despite the recent growth in opportunities for the active sport tourist, this type of tourism is not new. As early as 776 BC, individuals travelled to participate in athletic competitions to honour the god Zeus (McIntosh *et al.*, 1995). Throughout history, the affluent sectors of a society frequently travelled to pursue their favourite sports. At the end of the 19th century, in addition to skeet and trap shooting and fishing, well-to-do guests at the exclusive southern resorts in the US were enjoying the newly imported game of golf. By the mid 1970s, it was estimated that 33% of all airline passengers in the US were sport tourists (American Society of Travel Agents, 1976). Indeed, in studies of tourist motivation, health and sports are repeatedly identified as reasons for choosing a particular vacation (Hudman, 1980). However, in the 1990s the number and the diversity of opportunities to engage in sport tourism have blossomed (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 1993). Travel magazines, newspapers, television and radio commercials are full of destinations, attractions, and events focused on sport, and physical activity. In particular, resorts have become meccas for the active sport tourist. Resorts have become synonymous with their sport and recreation facilities. 'Out-standing golf courses can be a major drawing card for resorts' (Gee 1988, p. 175). It is no longer sufficient to be located by beautiful beaches, spectacular mountains or famous attractions. Redmond (1991) suggests that high quality

sport and fitness facilities are a necessity if a resort is to be a successful tourist destination.

Historically, many of these resorts were summer destinations for the affluent segments of the population, providing them with a chance to escape the heat of the cities. In the 1890s and early 1900s warm weather winter resorts began to grow in popularity. First California then Florida emerged as the destination for the wealthy to escape the cold northern winters. During the 1930s in addition to the traditional summer resorts and the warm weather winter resorts, cold weather resorts emerged as the popularity of alpine skiing grew. Sun Valley Idaho was the first all-inclusive ski resort in the US. Subsequently, ski resorts in Aspen and Vail, Colorado, Park City, Utah, and Lake Tahoe, Nevada, among others, have been developed throughout this century. After some financially difficult periods in the middle of this century, the resort segment of the hospitality industry has grown extensively. From 1986 to 1989 resort occupancy rates increased from 65.8% to 69.6%, outperforming other sectors of the lodging industry (Acquaro, 1990). In fact, by the mid 1980s it was apparent that 'travel for golf had (*sic*) spawned a major industry of hotels, resorts and even a golf museum' (Gee *et al.* 1989, p. 372). Gee (1988) suggests while a number of demographic trends such as the rise in dual income families, delayed marriages and child rearing made resorts more accessible to a larger segment of the population, the typical resort visitor remains more affluent and better educated than many other American tourists.

While resorts are recognized as the mecca for physically active tourists, other segments of the travel industry have not missed out on the chance to attract the active sport tourist. 'Cruise lines have also made sports and fitness activities readily available to their health-minded passengers' (Van Putten, cited in Fusco, 1996, p. 146). Norwegian Caribbean Line has four fitness directors on the SS Norway offering aerobics, team sports, and nutrition classes. Carnival Cruise lines offers 'Spa and Sport Talks.' Royal Caribbean Cruises encourages participation in its fitness programmes by offering passengers 'shipshape dollars' as incentives. Passengers on board the 'Legend of the Seas' can even play golf on an 18 hole miniature course, in addition to enjoying a fully equipped gym, spa, and sauna.

Back on dry-land, spas which have long been associated with health tourism have now placed a greater emphasis on physical activity and fitness. Historically, visits to spas were for therapeutic benefits. In more recent years, many spas have switched their focus to 'personal rejuvenation programmes' (Williams *et al.*, 1996, p. 12). Acquaro (1990) cites a concern with health and fitness in explaining the renewed interest in spa vacations in the 1990s. Advertising for spas centres around fitness. At the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa in Florida 'there are 35 fitness classes daily;' The Peaks in Colorado offers 'the ultimate fitness for body and mind in a handsome setting of pampered luxury' (The Spa Finder, 1996). Costin (1996), in an account of her experience at the Green Door Spa in California writes that 'the spa serves up a strenuous schedule that makes Jane Fonda look like a slacker.'

Another segment of the hospitality industry which has also recognized the importance of health and fitness to business is the urban hotels segment: 'Simply put, fitness sells rooms' (Butwin, 1982, p. 115). This segment of the travel industry primarily caters to the business traveller, although increasingly on weekends, leisure travellers are attracted to these hotels. Hotel managers have been quick to realize that these travellers want opportunities to workout, and so, complete health clubs, guest privileges at nearby fitness facilities, jogging trails, and even golf course access have become the norm at most large urban hotels.

Thus, there seem to be extensive opportunities available to the active sport tourist. It is generally assumed that the 'national preoccupation with health and fitness and healthy life styles' (Gee, 1988, p. 49) has stimulated this tremendous growth in sport tourism among all sectors of the US population. Martin (1992, p. D4) asserts that 'in these fit times, you don't just stand around admiring exotic destinations, you hike, float, climb, ski, trek, dive, sail, paddle, dogsled, horseback, mountain bike and sea kayak them.' Whether, vacationers want to play golf or tennis, take an aerobics class, or receive instruction in an activity of their choice, the prevailing message in the tourism industry is that sport tourism is 'the entrepreneurial development of the nineties' (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 1995, p. 1) and as such is gaining mass appeal. Is this a true reflection of the situation? One way to answer this question is to find out exactly who is an active sport tourist?

Who is an active sport tourist?

A prevailing stereotype is that Americans are obsessed with sport, fitness, and exercise. However, in reality if the actual participation rates in any form of moderate physical activity are examined, very few Americans are involved on a regular basis. The Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health released on 11 July, 1996 found that less than 20% of Americans are 'sufficiently active;' 60% of Americans are not regularly active, and 25% of Americans are not active at all. Kelly (1996, p. 225) suggests that 'media attention to health and fitness has tended to exaggerate the extent of regular participation.' Several studies since the mid-1980s confirm this contention.

Warnick and Howard (1985) found that participation in ostensibly mass leisure activities such as golf and tennis was confined to less than 5% of the adult population. Likewise, Howard (1992) in a study of sport and fitness participation patterns over a ten year period (1980-89) found that not only had participation rates decreased over the decade, but that regular involvement in activities such as tennis, racquetball, and aerobics was limited to a very small segment of the population. He found that only about 2% of the total adult population accounted for about 75% of the total participation rates in mainstream physical activities. The only activity which gained participants over the decade was golf. Approximately ten million more adults reported playing golf in 1989 than in 1980; Aburdene and Naisbitt (1992) report that women constitute 40% of the new golfers since 1986. Even so, golf participation only accounted for approximately 10% of the adult

Table 1. Participation in sports commonly associated with active sport tourism by US residents for 1993 (Bureau of the Census, 1995)

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Rank (1 = highest participation)</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Modal Age (years)</i>	<i>Modal Income (Dollars, US)</i>
Aerobics	9	3527	21 359	25–34	50–74 999
Golf	10	17 212	5421	25–34	50–74 999
Skiing (Alpine)	22	6462	4033	25–34	50–74 999
Tennis	18	5896	1003	18–24	50–74 999
Swimming	2	27 713	33 640	25–34	50–74 999
Exercising (equipment)	7	16 901	17 999	25–34	50–74 999
Jogging	12	11 429	8854	25–34	50–74 999

Based on a sample of 10 000 households, persons aged 7 years or above

population. Moreover, Howard found that rather than gaining ground, womens overall participation in sport and physical activities declined over the decade. Thus, just when it seems that participation in sport and fitness activities is an important component of mass leisure and tourism, the reality is that regular participation in any form of physical activity is limited to a very narrow segment of the population.

So who are these physically active Americans? An examination of the 1993 participation patterns for sports and physical activities most commonly associated with active sport tourism appears to confirm the contention that we are talking about a narrow segment of the population (Table 1). With the exception of swimming and aerobics, women reported lower participation rates than their male counterparts (Bureau of the Census, 1995). Also, the highest rates of participation in all of these activities were reported by individuals aged between 25 and 34 years (for tennis, 18–24 years) with household incomes of between 50 000 and 74 999 US dollars. Of course the conclusion from these statistics should not be that people older than 34 and who earn more or less than 50 000–74 999 US dollars do not participate in these activities. But the patterns seem to confirm that age, gender and, income (as one indicator of social class) differences are apparent between those Americans who are physically active and those who are not. Moreover, Rudman (1984) found that these differences are accentuated over the life course. He found that while participation in sport decreases with age. White males with higher levels of education and income are more likely to remain actively involved in sports, particularly individual sports such as golf and tennis. Thus, the profile of the active American seems to support Nixon and Freys (1996) contention that participation in sport is still stratified, despite the prevailing ideology of openness and democratization. As Kidd (1995, p. 232) suggests ‘despite the myth of sport as the great equalizer, participation is still heavily dependent upon the financial resources and cultural capital that class background brings and this is structured by gender, ethnicity, and race.’ So, how does this relate to active sport tourism?

We all know of examples whereby individuals have tried new activities while on holiday. In fact, some travel companies and resorts specialize in learn to ski or golf or tennis or sail, or an endless list of activities while on vacation. However, the pattern that Priestley (1995, p. 212) found in relation to golf vacations is probably a more accurate account of the situation. He suggests that 'clearly a relationship exists between the total number of golfers in a country and the number of golf tourists generated, although this relationship is not exactly proportional.' Thus, while some tourists may be motivated by the novelty and change associated with learning new skills (Cohen, 1974; Lee and Crompton, 1992), others may emphasize competence-mastery or self development as the prime push factors in selecting a particular vacation style (Ryan, 1993). Schreiber (1976) in an investigation of sport travellers found that they were motivated by a sense of accomplishment. They wanted opportunities to improve their existing skills and to demonstrate their prowess in their sport of choice. Championship golf courses, black diamond ski slopes, and tournament quality tennis courts provide these 'skilled consumers' (Richards, 1996) with the opportunity to test their skills in pre-eminent conditions. Thus, if the number of Americans who regularly take part in some form of physical activity represents a small segment of the total population, does it follow that those individuals who choose sports vacations constitute an even smaller portion of the population?

Schreiber (1976, p. 86) described the sports traveller as 'more affluent, better educated, and more active than the traveller in general.' More recently, in a study of 1277 New England (USA) residents, Gibson and Yiannakis (1994) found that 57.8% of the men and 44.8% of the women surveyed reported that they liked to stay physically active and engage in their favourite sports while on vacation. One third of these active sport tourists reported annual family incomes of 70 000 US dollars or more (mean income for the State of Connecticut 53 848 US dollars, 1990). Over two thirds (76.4%) of these active sport tourists were college educated (49.7% of Connecticut residents had some college education, 1990), and 23.5% had earned advanced degrees (PhD., MD (medical doctor), or JD (lawyer)). Attle (1996)³ in a survey of 800 Connecticut residents found that during their most recent vacations, 223 individuals reported that they had engaged in active sport tourism. Of these 223 sport tourists, 61% were men and 39% were women; 24.2% reported annual incomes of over 66 000 US dollars, and 55.1% were college educated, with 29.6% holding a Masters Degree or above. From this research Gibson *et al.* (1997) developed a profile of the typical active sport tourist (Table 2). Once again the characteristics which distinguish active sport tourists from other types of tourists are that active sport tourists are more likely to be male, affluent and college educated.

In reviewing the tourism-related literature, this profile of the active sport tourist is repeatedly substantiated. Gee (1988, p. 498) suggested that 'typical resort traveller is better educated and better off than the typical US pleasure traveller.' Gosline (cited in Morse and Lanier, 1992, p. 44) reported that travelling golfers are relatively affluent, with one third reporting incomes over 50 000 US dollars per annum. These golfers are 'not only wealthier and older

Table 2. Profile of individuals likely to engage in active sport tourism while on vacation (Gibson *et al.*, 1997)

<i>Characteristics of the active sport tourist</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More likely to be male ● Affluent individuals ● College educated ● Willing to travel long distances to participate in their favourite sports ● Likely to engage in active sport tourism well into retirement ● Tend to engage in repeat activity i.e. not a 'one-off' vacation

than both the general US population and the nations golfers, they also play considerably more rounds than the country's average golfer' (Morse and Lanier, 1992, p. 44). Thus, Mcmillans (1994, p. 31) contention that 'the golf-plus vacation has become everybody's vacation' is certainly open to debate. Stoddart (1990) notes that although there are more opportunities available for less affluent golfers, the game is still primarily the realm of the upper socio-economic classes.

Similar demographic patterns are found in other active sport tourism pursuits. Kaae and Lee (1996) found that alpine and cross-country skiers tend to be well educated and relatively affluent. While equal numbers of men and women took part in cross country skiing, fewer women were alpine skiers. This trend was confirmed by Williams and Lattey (1994) in their investigation of the constraints faced by women with regards to skiing. The opposite pattern seems to be present in the spa world. In an advertisement for The Doral Saturina Spa, Miami, Florida, the message is that the fitness programmes are for women while 'the golf courses are adjacent to the property and husbands may actually want to join you at this spa' (All Destinations Travel, 1996). At prices ranging from 2942 to 4069 US dollars for a seven night 'spa renewal programme,' the exclusion is not just along gender lines, but is based on financial resources as well.

Discussion and implications for future research in active sport tourism

While tourism has become increasingly accessible to more and more people in the western world over the last century, aided by the pioneer of the package tour, Thomas Cook, mass transportation on cars, buses, trains, and aeroplanes, and opportunities for paid vacations, among other developments, many people still do not travel for pleasure. In some cases, this is a conscious choice, for others conditions related to social position such as 'cultural self confidence' (linked to level of education; Graburn, 1983), gender role ideology (Madrigal *et al.*, 1992), income (Perlman, 1973), and race (Philipp, 1993) among others, not only affect the propensity to take vacations, but the type of vacation taken. In the case of active sport tourism, it appears that class and gender are correlated with the likelihood that individuals will choose to take a sport-oriented vacation.

Research in the sociology of sport and the sociology of leisure has frequently documented the existence of inequality in the availability of opportunities to engage in a wide range of leisure experiences due to gender, race, and social class among others. Disparities exist between men and women in terms of their access, entitlement, and freedom of choice in all aspects of leisure (Deem, 1986; Wearing and Wearing, 1988; Henderson and Bialeschki, 1991). More specifically, the literature on womens participation in sport and physical activity is full of examples demonstrating how gender-typed social expectations influence womens participation in sport (Green-dorfer, 1979; Boutilier and SanGiovanni, 1983; Hargreaves, 1990). Changes in societal definitions regarding appropriate behaviour for women have led to a significant increase in the number of females participating in sports at all levels. However, despite this increased participation, the distribution of women in all types of sporting activity is not uniform (Firebaugh, 1989). As Jackson and Marsh (1986) found, the attitude that not all sports are 'feminine' still exists, especially if the sport requires aggressive physical activity. What are the potential implications of the continued existence of gender inequalities in sport have on active sport tourism as a vacation choice for women? One avenue of future research might be the family vacation. In the US, the family vacation is still a widespread phenomenon. Of the 856 million vacation person-trips taken by Americans in 1988-89, 323 million person-trips were taken by families (married adults with children) (Mason, 1990). Families 'are going skiing' 'backpacking, exploring new cultures and historic sites' (Mason, p. 92). Is mum due to her lack of experience in sport doomed to sit in the ski lodge all day waiting for her family? Or, as the advertisement for the Doral Saturina Spa, Miami, Florida suggests that she *works* at improving her body while her husband *plays* golf.

Differences in leisure, sport, and physical activity patterns and preferences have also been linked to race. While, none of the sport tourism studies cited addressed the issue of race and participation in active sport tourism, one could argue that this should be included in future research. Regarding golf, one of the most popular pursuits for active sport tourists, Stoddart (1990) reports that golf club membership at championship courses is still homogeneous in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and class background. Certainly, if 'Tiger Woods,' golf's rising professional star, still cannot play on some golf courses in the US because of his race (Yu, 1996), this could be indicative of a wider pattern of discrimination in golf. Stamps and Stamps (1985) concluded that race is more important than social class in shaping leisure patterns. Although Floyd *et al.* (1994) found that there is an interaction between race and class in relation to leisure preferences. In fact, their findings suggest that the effects of race on leisure preferences may be mediated by class membership, that is the effects of race on leisure preferences may operate differently among individuals from different social strata. In terms of sport and physical activity, much of the research in the US has focused on the discrimination experienced by black athletes in elite level sport (Phillips, 1976; Leonard, 1987). Nonetheless, Phillips (1993) writes of the

sports opportunity structure whereby access to sports such as swimming and tennis for minorities is limited by financial and social barriers. The best facilities, coaching, and opportunities to engage in sports such as tennis, swimming, and golf are found in the more affluent schools and private clubs. Once again there is evidence of the interaction between race and social class. Floyd *et al.* (1994) suggests that future research needs to address the inter-relationship between class, race, and gender and the effects on leisure preferences. This recommendation might also be heeded in future studies on active sport tourists. The absence of minority participants is particularly noticeable on the ski slopes and other outdoor recreation pursuits. As Harris (1997, p. 108) laments 'whenever I find myself in nature' 'cross-country skiing in northern Vermont, hiking a bit of the Appalachian Trail – mine is nearly always the only black face around.'

Since the late 1950s many leisure scholars have claimed that the relationship between social class and leisure behaviour is minimal. With more leisure time and increased affluence among many sectors of society, it was suggested that class-based behaviour differences had diminished. Kaplan (1975, p. 93) wrote 'the days are past when the life of a family in its vacation or other free time is a close reflection of the kind of work done or other class criteria.' Roberts (1970) wrote of a move towards a 'leisure democracy' and explained differences in leisure activities as the outcome of various small 'taste publics.' Critcher (1989, p. 160) suggested that 'leisure might be one area where class forms of inequality are less important' where individuals 'can make choices which are not prestructured by social stratification.' However, many scholars have remained cautious about such generalizations. Parker (1971) argued that there was substantial evidence to document the continued influence of class on leisure styles. Rojek (1985, p. 16) proposed that leisure relations cannot be divorced from the context of capitalist based power structure and as such 'leisure is not "free" but subject to some form of constraint.' Likewise, Featherstone (1987) argued that leisure tastes are related to class structure, more specifically the relative power of each class strata. Renewed attention to the issue of the effects of social stratification on sport and physical activity have dispelled the myth of democratization somewhat (Donnelly, 1993; 1996; Harvey and Donnelly, 1996).

Support for the proposition that sport and physical activity has been democratized most often arises out of the fact that ostensibly in today's society, activities which were once the sole domain of upper class white males, are played by middle and working class persons, who may also be female and non-white. However, as Kelly (1989) suggests, leisure is situated action, that is location and style of participation may be more influential in demonstrating the effects of social stratification than the actual activity. Likewise, Donnelly (1993, p. 417) argues that for a sport to be fully democratized we should not just address opportunities to participate, but also 'the right to be involved in the determination of the forms, circumstances, and meanings of participation.' Donnelly suggests that two processes are involved in democratization. It is not enough to provide individuals with the opportunity to participate, but

the opportunity needs to be seized by those previously not involved. The problem with the second process argues Donnelly is that sport and physical activities are culturally defined and are associated with a set of cultural meanings. Thus, the upper classes limit access to their leisure activities not only through cost but more resolutely at the ideological level. Dixon (1984) and Robertson and Fletcher (1980) found evidence of this among the working class. Both of these studies found that participation in sports such as tennis and golf and the adoption of a fitness oriented life in general is not compatible with working class culture and lifestyles. Perhaps, as Dawson (1986) suggests, that by using Bourdieus concept of cultural capital to analyse leisure, it might be possible to investigate more effectively the role leisure plays in the reproduction of class relations, which appears to be more complex than economic inequality alone.

So what implications does this have for active sport tourism? It is likely that life chances in terms of economic access interact with lifestyles and influence the probability that an individual will have the desire and self-confidence to choose a sport related vacation. Studies have shown that discretionary income certainly acts as a constraint on leisure choice (Hultsman *et al.*, 1986). Indeed, financial barriers cannot be ignored especially when addressing the issue of access to sport tourism. With adult one day lift tickets costing between 40 and 52 US dollars a day at many US ski areas and a round of golf costing anywhere from 45 to 100 US dollars and up, add in travel, lodging, equipment and clothing costs, plus the costs for additional family members, financial constraints cannot be dismissed. However, physical skill and the confidence in ones own ability, arising out of lifestyle, are significant, especially when choosing to engage in sport and physical activities (Harvey and Donnelly, 1996).

The profile of the typical sport tourist as relatively affluent and educated (and more likely to be male) suggests that active sport tourism has not become democratized to the extent that the pervasiveness of sport tourism in recent years might indicate. One avenue of future research might be the hypothesis that recent trends in sectors of the sport tourism industry in the US suggest that the opposite of democratization might be occurring. The US ski industry might be a case study for such research. For example, Aspen, Colorado, renowned as a destination for upscale tourists was the first ski area in the US to charge over 50 US dollars for a days skiing, an action which prompted many residents of Colorado to complain that skiing was becoming too expensive (Associated Press, 1995). Similarly in Vail, Colorado local residents expressed concern that the cost of skiing would discourage the next generation of skiers from taking up the sport (*ibid.*). On the east coast of America, many of the once family owned resorts in New England have been taken over by corporations such as the American Skiing Company. With the latest in lift equipment, newly renovated lodges, and high rates of liability insurance, many of the families that once skied at these resorts can no longer afford to do so. In fact, a civil antitrust complaint was filed against the proposed merger of The American Skiing Company and S-K-I Ltd. (US

Department of Justice, 1996) for fear that New England Residents would be priced out of skiing at their local ski areas.

Conclusions

The consensus in the tourism industry appears to be that sport tourism is a growth area (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 1995). Even Walt Disney World in Florida, the largest theme park in the World has recognized the value of providing resort guests with five championship level golf courses, jogging trails, tennis courts, fitness facilities and a range of boating activities (American Express, 1997). If, as Parkin (1971) suggested, active leisure is an agent in the reproduction of class inequalities through exclusion and solidarity, as active sport tourism gains more attention from the academic community, it appears that there is a need to adopt a more critical approach to the study of the domain. Without this perspective, active sport tourism will develop unchecked, and before long, if the present trends continue, instead of becoming democratized and open to all, (at least those who would like to be sport tourists), irrespective of gender, race or class, it is likely that sports vacations will become more exclusive. Already, as Priestley (1995, p. 212) found, the golf tourist market can be differentiated into three segments: the pilgrimage to St Andrews, the economic golfing holiday, and the golfing holiday with luxury trimmings. With the proliferation of the comprehensive resort, it is the third type of golf holiday which is becoming the norm, certainly in the US travel market.

Notes

1. In 1986 The Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sport hosted an international seminar on outdoor education, recreation and sport tourism. In 1993 the Journal of Tourism Sport was launched by the Tourism Sport International Council. Since 1994, the Tourism Sport International Council has held virtual sport tourism conferences on the Internet . . . *Teaming for Success: A Forum on Sport Tourism* organized by the George Washington University was first held in March 1997 and will hold its second meeting in September 1998. Likewise, the Sports Tourism Marketing Conference hosted by the Illinois Bureau of Tourism and Illinois State University is also in its second year.
2. It should be noted that golf has become the primary attraction for many resorts not only in the US, but all over the world (Priestley, 1995). Between 1986 and 1990 alone there were 8 million new golfers (Aburdene and Naisbitt, 1992) and the National Golf Foundation predicts that by the year 2000 the number of golfers will increase to 35 million (Gee, 1988).
3. Attle (1996) used the tourist role scale developed by Gibson and Yiannakis (1994) to measure tourist role preference and in this case preference for active sport tourism.

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