

**Applying An Organizational Approach
To The Sociology Of Leisure:
A Study Of Clog Dancers**

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(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to enhance understanding of leisure experiences by applying an organizational approach to the sociology of leisure. This organizational approach, used mainly to study work and occupations, consists of a conceptual framework derived from social systems theory and structural functionalism. The sensitizing concepts used from this framework were recruitment, socialization, and identity.

In this study, I focused on the leisure group of clog dancers. My research questions, derived from this approach, include (1) How do clogging groups recruit their members? (2) How are people socialized into their role as cloggers and group members? (3) Do cloggers form a special identity because of this activity?

Twenty cloggers were interviewed for this study. All of the dancers were white, and all but one were female. Most of the dancers were married, and their ages ranged from 20 to 69 years. All of the dancers have clogged for at least four years, and half of the dancers have been clogging for 10 or more years. Their educational levels covered a wide spectrum, from less than high school to Master's degrees. Occupational status and income level also varied widely.

Through concept-driven interviews, the dancers indicated what they believed were important aspects of their leisure experiences. A majority of the dancers stated that they were recruited through social networks or by media influence. They experienced both formal and informal socialization in learning dance steps and how to perform as a team player in front of an audience. Finally, the dancers believed that they held a special identity because of their talents as a clogger. While each dancer derived different meanings from his/her identity as clogger, this identity appeared to be salient and psychologically central for all of the dancers interviewed.

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