Implementing a preferred equity model for the delivery of leisure services in the US context

JOHN L. CROMPTON and BRUCE E. WICKS
Texas A&M University, Department of Recreation and Parks, Texas Agricultural Experiment Service and Texas A&M University, Department of Recreation and Parks, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas, USA

The paper is divided into four sections. First, the context of the leisure services field in the US is briefly reviewed as it relates to the emergence of equity as an administrative concern. Second, a taxonomy of eight equity models is presented and each is described. Third, an implementation approach is suggested which consists of five steps: (1) development of a distributional typology on the basis of three dichotomies of service characteristics which are likely to influence perceptions of equity; (2) recognition of the influence of four decision-making groups in defining equity models; (3) soliciting Equity model preferences for different types of leisure services from the decision making groups; (4) measuring equity; and (5) translating service equity model preferences into a distributional policy plan. Finally, conclusions are drawn and implications discussed.

The context

The emergence of equity during the last decade as a concern in leisure service delivery in the US is primarily attributable to two stimuli. First, the external financial, political and legal environments, to which leisure agencies have to respond, has changed. Second, substantial theoretical contributions have been made by academics in conceptualizing equity. These two stimuli are briefly reviewed in this first section of the paper.

Impact of changes in the environment

Since the conclusion of World War II, local recreation and park agencies in the US have provided an increasing range and level of services. Their growth was stimulated by an expanding property tax and sales tax base, and these two taxes are the primary source of local government revenues. The expanding tax base was accompanied by a plethora of grant and revenue sharing programmes emanating from the Federal and some state governments. In the late 1970s, the rapid growth in the local tax base was curtailed in many parts of the country. In some instances this was a result of economic recession, while in others it was a function of ‘the taxpayers’ revolt. The revolt was manifested through regulations passed in many states which
placed a ceiling on the amount of taxes that local governments could levy.

Local government expenditures on recreation and parks as a whole in the US have continued to grow in aggregate terms despite the adverse impact of these events. In the period 1980–5, they increased 9.5% in real dollar terms after adjustment for inflation (McCarrville and Crompton, 1987). However, there are four caveats which temper this ostensibly encouraging trend. They are: (1) this average includes many agencies which have received an unprecedented decrease in real dollar terms during this period; (2) this rate of growth is substantially lower than in previous years (McCarrville and Crompton, op. cit.); (3) the withdrawal of a substantial number of government grant programs has required local governments to self-finance many services which were previously supported by the Federal government, and (4) operational costs have increased disproportionately during this period primarily because of quantum increases in utility charges, and increased use of existing services which has created additional maintenance and operating expense.

During times of abundance there is no compelling pressure to examine or question the process of how public services are distributed (Thurrow, 1981). As long as each group in the pluralistic society receives more, everyone is likely to remain relatively satisfied, and decision makers are not required to address Laswell’s well known question: ‘Who gets what, when and how?’ (Laswell, 1958).

The passing of the era of relative abundance stimulated concern about fairness and equity. Lucy and Mladenka (1980) observe, ‘Equity will be more salient in a period of scarcity. Winners and losers will become more evident and more aware of what they are winning and losing’ (p. 1). Thurrow (1981) adds:

In this situation . . . the essence of problem solving is loss allocation. But this is precisely what our political process is least capable of doing. When there are economic gains to be allocated, our political process can allocate them. When there are large economic losses to be allocated, our political process is paralysed (p. 12).

In the many jurisdictions where the available resources are not increasing, the allocation of a greater proportion of resources to one group leads to a reduced allocation to other groups. Consequently, those who expect to benefit from redistribution intensify pressure for change, and those who would be worse off often show resistance (Hirsch, 1976). In this changed environment, the definitional question of service allocation, ‘Who gets what?’ may need to be rephrased to ‘Who gets to keep what and who loses what?’ (Masotti and Lineberry, 1978).

When a leisure service is offered, a constituency is nurtured and a level of expectation and dependence among members of that constituency is established. Reduction of an accustomed service level may be expected to generate dissent and invite closer scrutiny of the fairness of the service’s allocation, because the reduced service offering exerts a direct and visible adverse impact on the quality of the lives of individuals who comprise the constituency. The dissent is likely to be particularly acute in urban areas where heterogeneous groups coexist in close proximity, because in such areas the service levels received by others are relatively visible and perceptions of winners and losers are more easily formed.

A second, but less dominant environmental factor than reduced resources, which has stimulated interest in equity in the US has been the intervention role of the courts. Increasingly, disaffected public services are seeking reparation. The legal bases for the court evolution of these cases in the recent four year long case in (1987).

Impact of theoretical contributions

The American Heritage Dictionary being just, impartial, and fair. There has been an increasing acceptance of service delivery. The most important public service allocation was the right to vote. Rawls suggests that service is found in what he terms, ‘The economic inequalities are to be the least advantaged’ (p. 83). A better situated is only equitably advantaged members of society. Maximin Criterion because it highlights Rawls’ Difference Principle provides a philosophical alternative to extremes. For example, it can an equity model to a leisure service allocation where resources are deprivally present without. Rawls suggests a minimum service provision standard to the needy.

To be of use to public administration justice need to be explained integration between social theory and service delivery decisions may political bargaining where the (p. 406). Politicians, self-serving Rawls’ philosophy, Merget and Rawls’ theory is its recognition process in attaining distribution to be made to understand the theory, and equity as manifest.

What emerges as most important is the allocation process, is that a creation of a minimum standard. This provides administrators with service allocation in their agency (Rich, 1979).
Implementing a preferred equity model
courts. Increasingly, disaffected citizens who are unhappy with the distribution of public services are seeking redress for their complaints through the legal system. The legal bases for the courts' intervention, their impact, a description of the evolution of these cases in the recreation and parks field, and a discussion of the recent four year long case involving the Chicago Park District appear in Wicks (1987).

Impact of theoretical contributions

- The American Heritage Dictionary defines equity as 'the state, ideal, or quality of being just, impartial, and fair'. However, many definitions of 'fair' are possible. There has been increasing academic interest in analysing what is fair in the context of service delivery. The most exhaustive theoretical examination of what is fair public service allocation was published by Rawls in 1971, and his A Theory of Justice has spawned a substantial literature reacting to its ideas.

Rawls suggests that service allocation decisions should be based on the guidelines found in what he terms, 'The Difference Principle'. This suggests that 'social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged' (p. 83). The Principle directs that an increased share for those better situated is only equitable if this serves to improve the lot of the least advantaged members of society. The Difference Principle has been termed the Maximin Criterion because it seeks to maximize the minimum (Vezez, 1976).

- Rawls' Difference Principle is appealing because it builds on other concepts and provides a philosophical alternative to carrying distributional models to unacceptable extremes. For example, it would be unacceptable to strictly apply equality as an equity model to a leisure service that many residents did not want or need, thus wasting resources and depriving additional service benefits to those who are presently without. Rawls suggests that the ultimate goal should be to raise the minimum service provision standard by redistributing resources from the affluent to the needy.

To be of use to public administrators, the philosophical constructs of social justice need to be explained in ways that can assist decision making. Linkages between social theory and service allocation decisions are tenuous. It has been pointed out by Merget (1981) that the application of Rawlsian theory to day-to-day service delivery decisions may not always be possible because of 'the real world of political bargaining where the resources of power are not uniformly distributed' (p. 406). Politicians, self-serving citizen groups, and bureaucrats may not embrace Rawls' philosophy. Merget ultimately concludes that the practical message of Rawls' theory is its recognition of the profound importance of the allocation process in attaining distributional outcomes. That is, it has encouraged more effort to be made to understand the relationships between equity as expressed in social theory, and equity as manifested in actual service distribution patterns.

What emerges as most important from the work of Rawls for the leisure service allocation process, is that a theoretical base is established which justifies the creation of a minimum standard, while at the same time providing for exceptions. This provides administrators with a base from which to assess the equity of leisure service allocation in their agency (Crompton and Lamb, 1983; Lucy et al., 1977; Rich, 1979).
A taxonomy of equity models

This section suggests a taxonomy of equity models from which actor groups have to select those most appropriate for directing the allocation of resources for different types of public leisure services. In the years since A Theory of Justice was published, a series of scholars, primarily political scientists, have suggested conceptualizations of equity using both inductive and deductive approaches. In the context of leisure services, the most useful early work was probably that reported by Gold (1974), Farnham (1981) and Mladenka and Hill (1977). The taxonomy presented here is intended to embrace all the conceptualizations of equity which appear to have received support in the literature. It is depicted schematically in Fig. 1. It specifies four generic types of equity models and suggests that each can be operationalized in one, two or three different ways.

Compensatory Equity involves allocating services so that economically disadvantaged groups, individuals, or areas receive extra increments of resources. The operational objective of this model is to increase the compensatory role of public leisure services in order that opportunities for the economically disadvantaged may be improved.

The challenge with this model is to delineate who is disadvantaged. A number of authors have recognized need as a legitimate equity model but have not restricted it to the economically disadvantaged. Lineberry (1980) points out, ‘The concept of ‘need’ is a slippery one that, like beauty, tends to exist in the eyes of the beholder. All political issues are rhetorically wrapped in the raiment of ‘need’ which typically correlates with the advocate’s self-interest’ (p. 188). Without some qualifying criterion, ‘need’ can be interpreted in a variety of contradictory ways:

It could be argued that better educated areas of the community ‘need’ more library facilities because their residents read more. Equally persuasive, however, is the contention that poorer and less well-educated sectors of the population ‘need’ more libraries because their inhabitants cannot afford private reading materials (Lineberry, 1980, p. 181).

An economic criterion to define ‘need’ is adopted here because it offers a conceptually distinctive equity model which is different from the other seven models in the taxonomy. Other potential qualifying criteria of need overlap at least in part with demand, equality, or market equity models.

Allocations intended to achieve economically compensatory results would allocate bigger and better libraries and more parks to poorer neighbourhoods whose residents cannot afford books and have little recreational space. By definition, such public resource allocation decisions in principle are financially redistributive.

Equality entails allocating resources so either all residents receive equal input allocations for leisure services, or all residents receive equal benefits from leisure services, regardless of need, the amount of taxes contributed, or the price paid (Fig. 1). The wide acceptance of equality as a standard of equity appears to be based upon notions of ‘democracy’, ‘fairness’, and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution which guarantees equal treatment under the law (Zaitzevsky, 1982; Cranz, 1982).

In so far as the US has had an egalitarian tradition, it has been one of equality of inputs. This is most conspicuously institutionalized in the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution which incorporates the principle of non-discrimination. Governing without challenge, unless ‘suspect’ by the US Supreme Court to race, nationality, and religion equity in the US reflects an effort that racially discriminate.

For example, in the case U (1979), a consent decree was expensive litigation (Wicks, 1981) service inequities by ‘leveling’-u was markedly below the average was used to execute the levelin major park repair and rehab programmes; and (3) improved between white and black areas was forbidden to increase:exp identified as being inadequate.

Implementing the equality of sources to those neighbourhood that because much leisure partici of a facility or service. Knetsch availability of opportunities rates of participation among poor characteristics of the population factor in determining use. Op
Implementing a preferred equity model

Figure 1. A taxonomy of equity models for delivering public leisure services

---

from which actor groups have to
locate resources for different
Theory of Justice was published,
ave suggested conceptualizations
roaches. In the context of leisure
that reported by Gold (1974),
The taxonomy presented here is
of equity which appear to have
thematically in Fig. 1. It specifies
that each can be operationalized in
services so that economically dis-
extra increments of resources. The
the compensatory role of public
theorically disadvantaged may
ho is disadvantaged. A number of
model but have not restricted it
(1980) points out, ‘The concept of
exist in the eyes of the beholder.
in the rainment of ‘need’ which
interest’ (p. 188). Without some
a variety of contradictory ways:
community ‘need’ more library facilities
ive, however, is the contention that
on ‘need’ more libraries because their
adopted here because it offers a
different from the other seven
ing criteria of need overlap at least
models.
compensatory results would allo-
to poorer neighbourhoods whose
ational space. By definition, such
are financially redistributive.
all residents receive equal input
receive equal benefits from leisure
xes contributed, or the price paid
ndard of equity appears to be based
14th Amendment to the Constitu-
the law (Zaitzevsky, 1982; Cranz,
ition, it has been one of equality of
ized in the equal protection clause of
which incorporates the principle of
non-discrimination. Governments are permitted to differentiate among their clien-
tees without challenge, unless the classification for discrimination is considered
‘suspect’ by the US Supreme Court. Suspect classifications are currently restricted
to race, nationality, and religious preference. Much of the litigation concerning
equity in the US reflects an effort to secure equality of inputs by removing inequities
that racially discriminate.

For example, in the case US Justice Department vs. Chicago Park District,
(1979), a consent decree was signed by both parties to avoid extensive and
expensive litigation (Wicks, 1987). The consent decree sought to remedy existing
service inequities by ‘leveling-up’ services in minority areas where their provision
was markedly below the average in predominantly white wards. Three mechanisms
were used to execute the leveling-up process: (1) increased capital expenditure for
major park repair and rehabilitation; (2) larger staffs to provide recreation
programmes; and (3) improved levels of maintenance. To ensure that the disparities
between white and black areas were diminished as quickly as possible, the District
was forbidden to increase expenditures or manpower at parks other than those
identified as being inadequate.

Implementing the equality of inputs model would mean allocating most re-
ources to those neighbourhoods which had fewest existing recreational opportuni-
ties because much leisure participation is crucially dependent upon the availability
of a facility or service. Knetsch (1969) has suggested that, ‘We would expect that
the availability of opportunities would have much and probably more to do with
rates of participation among populations of different areas than differences in the
characteristics of the population’ (p. 89). Supply is perhaps the most important
factor in determining use. Operational difficulties would include determining
whether or not residential, private, and/or commercial leisure opportunities should be considered in evaluating which areas were spatially disadvantaged.

However, equality of inputs has little to do with equality if it simply enables people with more income and better education to win out over the less fortunate, even when the allocation of resources itself is equal. It has been observed by Lineberry (1977) that equal input allocation of services delivered to unequally endowed residents can produce extremely unequal outcomes, a phenomenon he calls 'the other side of equality' (p. 182).

The equal benefits alternative is a response to these limitations recognizing that equal resource inputs may not be directly related to equal outputs. This model was proposed by plaintiffs in the Beal vs. Lindsay case court case. Puerto Rican residents living in the neighborhood of Crotona Park alleged that New York City constitutionally discriminated against them by failing to maintain their neighborhood park in a condition equivalent to that of other parks in the Bronx. The city showed successfully that it had made a disproportionately greater effort in providing maintenance and operating inputs in favor of Crotona Park. The failure to provide equal outcomes was attributed to the high degree of vandalism at Crotona Park. The court ruled that the city could not be held responsible for the external social factors that nullified its input efforts.

The pragmatic concern in adopting an equal benefits approach is the difficulty of measuring recreational benefits. Evaluating the relative merits of facilities and services is a challenging research task. In the Beal vs. Lindsay case the unit of analysis was a facility. Inputs can be measured relatively easily, but although researchers such as Driver and his associates (1978, 1987) have made some progress in measuring recreation benefits, the tools are not available to make resource allocation on this criterion a practical alternative for the leisure manager.

Demand as an equity model allocates resources on the basis of demonstrated use (consumption) or vociferous advocacy. These two manifestations of demand may be conceptualized as being economic and political models, respectively (Fig. 1). Economic demand is manifested through demonstrated use. For example, high book circulation may be interpreted as a demand for libraries to provide more books and other resources. In many cities, library expenditures, staff personnel, and new acquisitions are allocated to branch libraries on the basis of circulation rates (Lucy and Mladenka, 1980). The higher its circulation, the greater the share of available resources a branch library receives. If residents of middle- and upper-income neighborhoods read more, then branches in those neighborhoods receive more resources. If this approach is adopted, the public by their use of a service determine the allocation of agency resources. The rational appeal of this 'Adam Smith' model is that the maximum number of citizens are likely to benefit if it is adopted (Wildavsky, 1979).

Political demand is operationalized through the relative intensity of vociferous advocacy and citizen contacts. The neighborhood organization movement and the perceived desirability of citizen participation in decisions may have led to the belief that responsiveness to requests and complaints demonstrates accountability to constituents and is an appropriate basis for decision making (Mladenka, 1981; Lucy, 1983).

Because of its administrative convenience and apparent fairness, the demand equity models have been widely defensible. However, demand varies by, for example, race (situations where demand is use more library books, visit lobby more aggressively — this has been argued by some that they cannot serve to mined direction (Crompton a). Market equity entails allocating either the taxes or the fee revenue prevalent allocation model used not the agency, that determin may be operationalized in this way. First, resources may be allo local government leisure service approach would allocate less proportion to the amount of revenue prevailing income redit that higher income groups held not otherwise be able to afford individuals from affluent areas decisions. If residents in a par model suggests they can have a it. This approach is at least pa have established special assesse swimming pools, tennis courts benefit a definite, definable no want a higher level of service at normal level of provision. To establishing a special assessment within its boundaries to pay an extra increment of leisure serv In response to demands to c substantially raised direct pri operationalization of market allocates. Residents neither require to pay through the tax as much or as little of a serv Full commitment to this equ pay a price that covered all c accepting that residents are not residents' needs are not relev market place' (Jones, 1980, p. 8 many to offer the most efficient associated with equity. Its ad almost entirely removed from
Implementing a preferred equity model

Wicks

Social leisure opportunities should not be disadvantaged. Equal equality if it simply enables some to win out over the less fortunate, equal. It has been observed by some services delivered to unequally entitled outcomes, a phenomenon he

these limitations recognizing that... equal outputs. This model was the new case. Puerto Rican residents argued that New York City unconstituted maintain their neighbourhoods in the Bronx. The city showed a greater effort in providing Crotona Park. The failure to see... is responsible for the external social

benefits approach is the difficulty of two manifestations of demand may vitally be different models, respectively (Fig. 1). Cincinnatian use. For example, high... more... libraries on the basis of circulation... the greater the share of... for residents of middle- and upper-middle in those... use by their public... The rational appeal of this 'Adam... citizens are likely to benefit if it is the relative intensity of vociferous opposition movement and the decisions may have led to the belief that demonstrates accountability to decision making (Mladenka, 1981;... apparent fairness, the demand

equity models have been widely adopted. Ostensibly, they appear reasonable and defensible. However, demand often harbours a hidden allocation bias: if demand... varies by, for example, race or class, leisure services also vary by race or class. In situations where demand is used as a basis for allocation — if better educated people read more library books, visit parks in their area more frequently, and complain or lobby more aggressively — they receive more leisure services. For these reasons, it has been argued by some that demand approaches are not real equity models, because they cannot serve to guide the allocation of leisure services in a predetermined direction (Crompton and Lamb, 1986).

Market equity entails allocating services to groups or areas in proportion to the amount of taxes paid. Since local government leisure services are financed primarily by property taxes, this approach would allocate leisure services to each area of a jurisdiction in direct proportion to the amount of taxes paid by residents and businesses. This would reverse prevailing income redistribution approaches through which it is intended that higher income groups hold pay for basic services that lower income groups may not otherwise be able to afford. This model may be adopted inadvertently if individuals from affluent areas have a disproportionate influence on allocation decisions. If residents in a particular neighbourhood desire a leisure service, this model suggests they can have as much of it as they want provided they pay taxes for it. This approach is at least partially implemented in many American cities which have established special assessment districts to pay for such items as parks, swimming pools, tennis courts, street landscaping or recreation centres which benefit a definite, definable neighbourhood. Residents of a neighbourhood may want a higher level of service or a capital improvement which is beyond the city's normal level of provision. To secure this they are permitted to vote in favour of establishing a special assessment district which would require all resident living within its boundaries to pay an additional increment of property tax to finance the extra increment of leisure service.

In response to demands to cut local taxes, many governments have imposed or substantially raised direct prices for a variety of leisure services. This second operationalization of market equity (Fig. 1) enhances the efficiency of resource allocation. Residents neither receive leisure services they do not want, nor are required to pay through the tax system for what other residents use. They can buy as much or as little of a service as they wish.

Full commitment to this equity model would mean that users were required to pay a price that covered all capital and operating costs. It would also require accepting that residents are not entitled to equal access to leisure services, and that residents' needs are not relevant unless they are backed up by 'dollar votes in the market place' (Jones, 1980, p. 89). Although this approach may be considered by many to offer the most efficient use of resources, it ignores the social welfare issues associated with equity. Its adoption would mean that some services would be almost entirely removed from poor neighbourhoods and reallocated to wealthier
neighbourhoods. This probably would violate the public’s sense of what is appropriate, rendering it politically infeasible. Hence, full commitment to this approach is unlikely. It is more likely that a ‘towards direct price paid’ model will be adopted recognizing different abilities to pay for a leisure service, but still accepting that those who cannot afford to pay full costs should not be denied the service.

The third operationalization of market equity is a least cost approach (Fig. 1). This model seeks to deliver a leisure service at the lowest cost, rationalizing that this is the most equitable use of tax dollars since it enables more of a service to be offered to all citizens for a given amount of money. It responds to market forces by seeking out sites where the costs of delivering leisure services is lowest. Thus, for example, a new park would be located in an area where land is least expensive.

In a period of fiscal retrenchment, this is an attractive equity model to many decision-makers who argue that agencies cannot afford to purchase prime locations because the cost of acquisitions is too high, or because the opportunity cost of removing valuable property from the tax rolls would adversely affect the jurisdiction’s tax base. For these reasons, leisure facilities are often sited at less visible and less accessible locations that are not sought by commercial interests. This approach fails to consider the potentially increased benefits of revenues and/or greater utilization that may accrue if a facility were located on a more expensive, but more visible and accessible site. The cost savings which may be made by the leisure agency from adopting this approach, are frequently acquired at the expense of potential users who are required to make an increased investment in their time, transportation, and inconvenience. Although this approach is frequently adopted, like the earlier demand equity models, it may be argued that least cost is not a real equity model, because it does not guide the allocation of leisure services in a predetermined direction.

Implementation of an equity policy

An understanding of the full array of eight equity models identified in the previous section facilitates the purposeful consideration of trade-offs which is essential for knowledgeable implementation. In this section of the paper, five steps are described which are central to the formulation of a policy plan which embraces the preferred equity models. They are: (1) development of a distributional typology of leisure services consisting of three dichotomies which are likely to influence preferred equity model choice; (2) recognition of the influence of four decision-making groups on defining equity models; (3) soliciting equity model preferences for different types of leisure services from decision-making groups; (4) measuring equity and (5) translating preferred leisure service equity models into a distributional policy plan.

Development of a distributional typology leisure services

Leisure services is an eclectic, multi-faceted field providing a mix of services with widely differing characteristics. The public service distribution literature suggests that different equity models may be perceived as appropriate for guiding resource allocations to services exhibiting different characteristics (Lucy and Mladenka, 1980; Wicks and Crompton, 1987). That is, what may be an acceptable model for distributing park services, may not be for the same services.

The literature suggests three potentially equity model preferences: (1) the fixed moveable services dichotomy. These dichotomy into which leisure services are typically grouped together be perceived to be appropriate.

The resource and humanistic dichotomy resource based offerings such as: residents to the extent that span with the location of residents in the alternative where the cost of land in Detroit the purchase of major opportunity of purchasing at: Conversely, many humanistic services are based on the need of organisations, such as Cranz, 1982). Special groups, are thought by some to be services offered by a municipal authority.

Fixed and moveable service dichotomy the immovable or fixed attrit and distributionally less subject to moveable programmes. This distribution in Detroit, a resources was mostly a function of purchases, rather than the result of the moveable non-capital intensive policy, control and bureaucracy. Usually long-term, because of addition, many leisure agencies were sold even if there were comparable resources in areas.

The degree of capital intensive in the Detroit study. He reported that programmes, many small neighbourhoods were being incrementally effective; those neighbourhoods currently agency compensated areas with addition of recreation services to meet the needs.

In contrast to fixed resources, such as mobile swimming pools and places, for specific neighbourhoods. Su
Implementing a preferred equity model

Wicks

he public's sense of what is enticence, full commitment to this direct price paid model will be leisure service, but still accepting public should not be denied the service. A least cost approach (Fig. 1) rest cost, rationalizing that this is more of a service to be offered minds to market forces by seeking is is lowest. Thus, for example, a bid is least expensive.

tractive equity model to many fords to purchase prime locations because the opportunity cost of such adversely affect the jurisdiction are often sited at less visible and imerical interests. This approach fits of revenues and or greater on a more expensive, but more also may be made by the leisurely acquired at the expense of raised investment in their time, approach is frequently adopted, argued that least cost is not a real location of leisure services in a distributing park services, may not be acceptable for the provision of aquatic services.

The literature suggests three dichotomies which are likely to influence substantially equity model preference. They are: (1) the resource and humanistic dichotomy; (2) the fixed moveable services dichotomy; and (3) the public and private services dichotomy. These dichotomies form the basis for a 'distributional typology' into which leisure services may be classified. The purpose of this typology is to facilitate the grouping together of leisure services whose resource allocations may be perceived to be appropriately directed by the same equity model.

The resource and humanistic dichotomy. The prevalent equity model for natural resource-based offerings such as parks has been either, equal opportunity for all residents to the extent that spatial allocation of the resource can be made coincident with the location of residents and their means of transportation, or least cost alternative where the cost of land is lowest. For example, Jones (1980) reported that in Detroit the purchase of major new land areas was undertaken only when the opportunity of purchasing at a bargain price could not be foregone by the city. Conversely, many humanistic services such as recreation have been provided on the basis of need (Cranz, 1982). Specific segments of the community, e.g. low income groups, are thought by some to deserve greater proportions of the recreation services offered by a municipality (Gray, 1969).

Fixed and moveable service dichotomy. The importance of this dichotomy lies in the immovable or fixed attributes of capital assets, such as parklands, being distributionally less subject to agency control and manipulation than are more moveable programmes. This distinction was reported in Jones' (1980) study of service distribution in Detroit, where it was found that the allocation of major park resources was mostly a function of previous philanthropy and opportunistic purchases, rather than the result of a deliberate allocational policy. In contrast, moveable non-capital intensive activities were found to be more subject to agency policy, control and bureaucratic rules. The impact of fixed service opportunities is usually long term because of the magnitude of the financial commitment. In addition, many leisure agencies have regulations which do not allow parks, for example, to be sold even if they are in areas of relative abundance to allow comparable resources in areas of scarcity to be acquired (Jones, 1980).

The degree of capital intensiveness was shown to be important in Jones' (1980) Detroit study. He reported that in addition to moveable, labour intensive programmes, many small neighbourhood parks which did not require large amounts of capital, were being incrementally acquired on a redistributive basis which favoured those neighbourhoods currently in need of parkland. Jones also found that the agency compensated areas with fewer parks by allocating a disproportionate amount of recreation services to them.

In contrast to fixed resources, some cities have relied on portable equipment such as mobile swimming pools and skate board rinks to provide recreational activities for specific neighbourhoods. Such mobile resources 'permit agencies to provide
more evenly distributed and diversified (recreational) opportunities' (Chubb and Chubb, 1981, p. 447). Although a mobile facility may not be as large or elaborate as a fixed one, its capital cost is less and it has the potential to serve many different locations.

Public and private services dichotomy. Students of public service delivery have suggested that services whose benefits accrue to the entire community (public services) should be financed by the entire community. Conversely, services whose benefits accrue predominantly to the individual (private services) should be paid for by the individual who uses the service (Howard and Crompton, 1980; Ostrom and Ostrom, 1977). From this concept a rationale has evolved which suggests that different services should be funded from different sources. For example, it may be suggested that major metropolitan parks should be financed through general tax revenues (equality) because they are perceived to be public services which are widely used by all sections of the community, while community education programs should be paid for directly by participants (market equity), since only participants are perceived to receive any benefit from them.

If a jurisdiction believes that the economically disadvantaged should not be excluded for receiving a private service because of their inability to pay, then inclusion of a mechanism to facilitate their participation becomes an integral part of equitable resource allocation based on the public-private service dichotomy. Generally, not enough thought and effort have been given in the United States to the problem of how to implement reduced prices for the economically disadvantaged. Agencies should be expected to be proactive in finding disadvantaged people and giving them the necessary card. Instead agencies most often adopt a reactive stance which lets disadvantaged people receive a reduced price if they apply for it.

This three dichotomy typology may be used to classify services. Each of the decision-making groups can then be invited to respond to representative services from the typology indicating their preferred equity model. A matrix, which assigns representative services to the three dichotomies, was used by the Austin, Texas, Parks and Recreation Department to solicit equity model preferences and is shown in Fig. 2 (Wicks and Crompton, 1987).

The influence of four decision-making groups in defining operational equity models

There are four sets of decision-makers whose interactions define operational equity models. They are: elected officials, agency managers, 'street-level bureaucrats', and residents. The degree of influence each exerts varies from service to service and from community to community.

Elected officials are likely to have most influence on adoption of a given equity model through the budgetary process which may mandate the type of service or facility to be offered, its capacity, scope, or range, and its location. They are likely to be particularly active in the allocational process in large capital intensive service allocation decisions. The greater the distributional consequences (in terms of permanence and magnitude) of the service, the more likely is its allocation to be strongly influenced by elected officials (Jones, 1980).

The influence of leisure agency managers stems from their continuous control over the agency's resources an administering leisure service de level of discretion in determin Hill, 1977; Miladinka, 1978). resource allocation process'. Sim agencies when:

1. agency rules are not over
2. political influence is not s
3. managers are receptive to

The greater the discretion over ger's conception of equity is li

The manager exerts this c through the use of the decision the absence of, policy directive used to make the task of allocat are often decisive in defining e Nevertheless, their impact on e their purpose, which may be p

Street level bureaucrats are t with citizens in the course of execution of their work (Lips include such people as recre interpreters. Decision rules est general in order to embrace a w likely to have some discretion determining an equity model. strongest when they work out
of public service delivery have to be as large or elaborate as potential to serve many different needs of the entire community (public). Conversely, services whose private services should be paid for (Crompton, 1980; Ostrom and as evolved which suggests that resources. For example, it may be financed through general tax to be public services which are while community education programs (market equity), since only from them.

A disadvantaged should not be by their inability to pay, then participation becomes an integral part public-private service dichotomy. Hence given in the United States to the economically disadvantaged. Finding disadvantaged people and most often adopt a reactive stance and price if they apply for it.

A service. Each of the respond to representative services model. A matrix, which assigns was used by the Austin, Texas, city model preferences and is shown

---

**Implementing a preferred equity model**

Figure 2 A matrix assigning representative services to the three distribution dichotomies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service areas</th>
<th>Humanistic</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Fixed</th>
<th>Moveable</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan parks</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood parks</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park maintenance</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming pools</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td></td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach programmes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community education</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic programmes</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: + = Yes, − = No, 0 = Unclear

---

over the agency's resources and the services it distributes. Those responsible for administering leisure service departments have been found to have a relatively high level of discretion in determining who will receive what benefits (Mladenka and Hill, 1977; Mladenka, 1978). Greene (1982) calls this phenomenon a 'flexible resource allocation process'. Such flexibility is most often present in leisure service agencies when:

1. agency rules are not overly restrictive,
2. political influence is not strong,
3. managers are receptive to citizens contacting the agency.

The greater the discretion over allocational matters, the more influential a manager's conception of equity is likely to be in determining the preferred model.

The manager exerts this central influence in determining an equity model through the use of the decision rules that he or she formulates in response to, or in the absence of, policy directives from elected representatives. Decision rules are used to make the task of allocating services more manageable. These decision rules are often decisive in defining equity models and determining winners and losers. Nevertheless, their impact on equity is frequently an unanticipated by-product of their purpose, which may be primarily to facilitate bureaucratic convenience.

*Street level bureaucrats* are those leisure agency employees who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs and have substantial discretion in the execution of their work (Lipsky, 1980; Pratts, 1979). They would typically include such people as recreation programme leaders, library staff, and park interpreters. Decision rules established by managers are likely to be relatively general in order to embrace a wide range of contingencies, so field employees are likely to have some discretion in interpreting the decision rules and thus in determining an equity model. Their potential influence on equity decisions is strongest when they work outside the confines of a facility in outreach roles,
because such contexts often provide opportunities for flexible interpretation of bureaucratic decision rules.

The marketing model of leisure service delivery recognizes that all residents should be invited to express their equity model preferences and influence the allocation process, because they supply an agency's tax funding and are the beneficiaries of its services. However, there is a pragmatic difficulty in operationalizing this approach. The distinctions between the eight equity models, and the implications of those distinctions, are complex ideas to communicate. Wicks (1986), using a probability sample survey of 833 Texas residents who were presented with alternative equity models for allocation of park resources and requested to indicate their preferences, reported that 28% of respondents exhibited high rates of indecision, lack of knowledge, or an apparent inability to meaningfully answer the questions. Because a sizeable proportion of general citizens are uninformed and lack understanding of such complex issues as equitable service allocation, their opinions may not represent a legitimate basis from which to make policy decisions.

An alternative approach is to involve citizen action group members rather than general citizens, provided such action group members represent a wide spectrum of opinion. People who impact the service distribution process through voluntary citizen organizations may be expected to function as advocates for neighbourhood values and/or react to special interest objectives. They are citizens who have become informed about local issues and entered the political arena. Research reported by Abney and Lauth (1985) showed that interest groups are likely to have an influence upon agency department heads. Furthermore, Steger (1984) found that the decision rules adopted by the agency, concerning citizen contacts and the mechanisms for reacting to citizens, are related to the effectiveness of interest groups in influencing agency behaviour.

Because these group members frequently have rather narrow goals, e.g. their neighbourhood's well-being or some other singular issue, they may be expected to be quite active when changes in the distribution service pattern which impact them are suggested or implemented. They may also be expected to have rather emphatic equity attitudes about service distribution patterns because of their parochial advocacy position.

Soliciting equity model preferences from actor groups
The growing importance of the equity issue in leisure service delivery is manifested by an increase in the amount of empirical work exploring it. Wicks and Crompton (1986) reported the comparative responses of 64 Texas Park and Recreation Department directors and a probability sample of 833 Texas residents to four alternative equity models concerning the allocation of park resources. This study was undertaken as part of the Texas State Recreation and Park plan. Both samples overwhelmingly supported the view that parks should be allocated to all areas equally, rather than on the basis of need, demand, or amount of taxes paid.

In Austin, Texas, three actor groups comprising a total of 800 respondents (residents who were members of citizen action groups, park and recreation department employees, and city council members) were surveyed as part of the city's process to update its leisure services plan, to determine if preferences for eight equity models differed among recreation and park services.

The State of California as from a probability sample of Research, 1987). The question in Austin and Texas State studies and recreation agencies be shown in Table 1. Like the were definitive indications. Although the questions were in Austin studies, it is clear that substantially different from these empirical efforts we members as to the fairest w. services. Such studies suggest between jurisdictions and be basis for decision makers to in different contexts which.

Table 1 Responses of Californians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity models</th>
<th>Three objectives are most heavily used.</th>
<th>Higher priority should go to areas facilities are most heavily used.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to those f. fees and entrance charges can be e. large share of the park's operating costs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas have the fewest facilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All areas of the community and th treated equally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas with the lowest incomes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas w. are most vocal in having recreation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas for the facilities is lowest.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas taxes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIC Research, Inc., 1987
Implementing a preferred equity model

Wicks

equity models differed between the three groups and between the seven different recreation and park services studied (Wicks and Crompton, 1987). It was found that equity preferences for resource allocation did vary both between services and between decision making groups.

The State of California as part of their state planning effort received responses from a probability sample of 971 California residents to eight equity models (C.I.C. Research, 1987). The questions were not geared to specific types of services as in the Austin and Texas State studies. Respondents were asked, 'where should public park and recreation agencies be spending their funds?'. A summary of the results is shown in Table 1. Like the Austin and Texas State studies described above, there were definitive indications of what equity models were preferred by Californians. Although the questions are not directly comparable to those in the Texas State and Austin studies, it is clear that the preferred equity models of Californians were substantially different from those reported in the other two studies.

These empirical efforts were intended to ascertain the perceptions of actor group members as to the fairest way to allocate resources for different types of leisure services. Such studies suggest that equity preferences are likely to differ between jurisdictions and between actor groups. Survey data of this type provide a basis for decision makers to negotiate a preferred equity model for specific services in different contexts which would serve to guide resource allocations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity models</th>
<th>Citizen responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas where existing facilities are most heavily used.</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to those facilities where user fees and entrance charges can be expected to cover a large share of the park’s operating and maintenance costs.</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas which currently have the fewest facilities.</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All areas of the community and the State should be treated equally.</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas where people have the lowest incomes.</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas where the residents are most vocal in having recreational facilities.</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas where the cost of the facilities is lowest.</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher priority should go to areas that pay the most taxes.</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIC Research, Inc., 1987
Measuring equity

Before a preferred equity model can be implemented, there has to be agreement as to how equity will be measured. The selected equity measures will be used to audit the existing distribution pattern so the extent to which it needs revising can be addressed and so that subsequent changes can be monitored. Three types of indicators may be used for assessing the equity of existing service and facility distribution patterns (Lucy and Mladenka, 1980). They are indicators based on resources, activities, or results. Resources are used to engage in activities which achieve results:

- **Resources** are inputs to the service distribution system which may include money, personnel, facilities, and equipment.
- **Activities** are the way in which the resources are used. For example, the number of recreation programmes offered; the frequency with which maintenance crews visit parks; or the number of hours facilities are open.
- **Results** are the outputs which measure what happens as a direct consequence of the service delivered. This is the indicator which the average citizen is most likely to use to evaluate services. How clean are the parks? How good are the programmes? What benefits do they deliver? How many people use the services?

Different conclusions may emerge from using different methods. For example, a preliminary study completed by the authors in Austin, Texas revealed that low income areas of the jurisdictions have been allocated a disproportionately large amount of resources in terms of both capital and operating budgets. In addition, more recreation programmes are offered in those areas than elsewhere (an activities measure). However, these groups participate much less frequently than do citizens in other areas of the jurisdiction (a results measure).

Resource indicators are probably the easiest to use because they are most readily available and most easily quantified. However, used on their own they may be misleading. Analysing resources, such as the expenditures, personnel and facilities that go into a neighbourhood, is of little value without considering how these resources were employed or with what results. Equal resource inputs can lead to different service levels and different results.

Because the American courts have consistently favoured inputs as equity indicators (e.g. *Beal vs. Lindsay*) and because they are easiest to adopt, most empirical equity assessments have used resource indicators. However, the different conclusions emerging from using different types of indicators suggests that resource indicators should be supplemented with activity and results measures whenever possible. This suggestion is reinforced by the recognition that equity indicators relate differently to the other major evaluation criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. Resource and activity indicators are measures of efficiency. For example, the extent to which dollars per head or acres mowed are equitable is an efficiency measure. In contrast, results indicators are measures of effectiveness. For example, the number of people using services in each neighbourhood or the relative cleanliness of neighbourhood parks are effectiveness measures.

**Translating preferred equity models into a distribution policy plan**

Because leisure services are so diverse, measurement of equity involves trying to assess the cumulative benefits frequently direct the measure equity. Although so (Crompton and Lamb, 198) measures the current appraisal invested in libraries, parks, either within or across categories, results' facilities in each need to be identified using the criteria.

The process is simplified in each type of facility rather to each neighbourhood. This is important; it is the amount and investment in value (resources if, for example, land is much Hence, a set of average value then be adjusted at each facility in quality between facilities.

This investment inventory allocation of services among the more detailed decisions within the priority of individual neighbourhoods.

Once an audit of the operational plan can be form plan aligns with the prefer distribution objects which objectives guide the distribution provide a basis for subsequent distribution objectives and compatible with an agency's equity process the Austin Par distribution objective for sw

To provide, within a five-year period citizens by raising the level of planning zones into which the (current mean investment/nz the lowest current and projected Zones 10, 2, 1, 8, and 5.

When objectives have been developed that provides a blue four operational component selection of site locations, ar 1985).
ed, there has to be agreement as to
which needs revising can be be monitored. Three types of existing service and facility. They are indicators based on
system which may include money, used. For example, the number of maintenance crews visit parks; or pens as a direct consequence of the age citizen is most likely to use to are the programmes? What benefits different methods. For example, a Austin, Texas revealed that low operated a disproportionately large operating budgets. In addition, areas than elsewhere (an activities less frequently than do citizens are). use because they are most readily used on their own they may be induries, personnel and facilities without considering how these dual resource inputs can lead to favoured inputs as equity indica-
easiest to adopt, most empirical. However, the different conclusions suggests that resource and results measures whenever recognition that equity indicators criteria of efficiency and effects of efficiency. For example, the ed are equitable is an efficiency measure of effectiveness. For example, neighbourhood or the relative cleanliness.

Distribution policy plan

ment of equity involves trying to assess the cumulative benefits offered by very different services. Pragmatic constraints frequently direct that input resources be the primary indicator adopted to measure equity. Although several resource input approaches have been suggested (Crompton and Lamb, 1986), the most useful is the investment approach that measures the current appraised value of all facilities. Thus, for example, dollars invested in libraries, parks, recreation, and cultural facilities could be aggregated either within or across categories to identify current investment value in ‘quality of life’ facilities in each neighbourhood. In this way, neighbourhood inequities could be identified using the criterion of a preferred equity objective.

The process is simplified because consistent standardized investment values for each type of facility rather than real investment values have to be used in each neighbourhood. This is important since investment value in itself serves no service purpose; it is the amount and quality of service opportunity that is relevant. Equity in investment value (resource inputs) may lead to inequitable opportunity or results if, for example, land is much more expensive in one area of town than another. Hence, a set of average values for each facility is needed. These average values may then be adjusted at each facility in order to incorporate an allowance for differences in quality between facilities (otherwise the measurement may be misleading).

This investment inventory approach facilitates better budgetary decisions for the allocation of services among different neighbourhoods. At the same time, it enables the more detailed decisions of which particular types of services should receive priority in each neighbourhood to be made flexibly in accordance with the wishes of individual neighbourhoods.

Once an audit of the existing distribution pattern has been completed an operational plan can be formulated to allocate resources so the existing distribution plan aligns with the preferred equity model. This is achieved by establishing distribution objectives which operationalize the preferred equity model. The objectives guide the distribution decisions and actions of the agency, and they also provide a basis for subsequent objective measurement and evaluation of progress. Distribution objectives and their prioritization have to be designed so they are compatible with an agency’s budgetary capacity. For example, as a result of its equity process the Austin Parks and Recreation Department adopted the following distribution objective for swimming pool provision in the city:

To provide, within a five-year period, adequate recreational swimming opportunities for all citizens by raising the level of public investment in basic swimming facilities in all ten planning zones into which the city is divided for planning purposes to $46 per capita (current mean investment in constant 1980 dollars), giving priority to those zones that have the lowest current and projected investment. Primary target areas meeting this criterion are Zones 10, 2, 1, 8, and 5.

When objectives have been established, a distribution strategy plan can be developed that provides a blueprint of how to meet the objectives. It should contain four operational components: channel of distribution, intensity of distribution, selection of site locations, and schedule of service delivery (Lamb and Crompton, 1985).
Concluding comments

The paper offers a framework for developing and implementing preferred equity models to guide the allocation of different types of leisure services. Although the particular financial, political and legal environments of the US have influenced the concern for, and implementation of, equitable allocation of resources, the general model described in this paper is applicable, in principle, in countries other than the USA.

As Cushman and Hamilton-Smith (1980) point out, all equity models are equitable in certain respects but some are clearly inequitable in terms of other competing principles. This is not surprising because competing values are at the heart of the matter. Since there are conflicting notions as to what is fair and what is not, leisure services agencies must be prepared to explore the full implications of each model in order to enlighten the service allocation process. However, there may be reluctance to launch a process such as that presented here because it is likely to raise awareness of the equity issue and may stimulate controversy. Wildavsky (1979) observes:

If problem finding is part of problem solution, as I have argued, analysts, at least part of the time, are in the business of creating the problems to which they then will propose solutions. Criteria can create problems. Applying yardsticks such as equity or efficiency or equality of opportunity to government programs may point up disparities between the actual and the desirable, for which remedies may then be proposed. Whether or not citizens or officials previously recognized these disparities, the gaps between actual and possible may then become problems for which solutions are sought (p. 353).

The public demand for bureaucrats and elected officials to be more accountable, e.g. to deliver services more efficiently, effectively and equitably, together with changes in the financial and legal environments to which leisure agencies have to respond, has reached the point in the US where the difficulties associated with finding equitable solutions are increasingly having to be confronted. Th ore (1981) comments, 'the difficulties of specifying equity neither obviate the need for equity decisions nor stop such decisions from being made' (p. 17).

Present distribution patterns do convey concepts of equity. These patterns and resulting notions of equity exist as a result of past actions irrespective of whether the agency planned for them or not. Consequently, when administrators are asked to be accountable for leisure services, the present distribution patterns have to be justified.

The first victim of tight budgets, modest growth and shifting populations is almost always the concept of equity. Yet it remains an elusive ideal toward which the leisure services field must continually work (Ruter, 1980). Equitable leisure service delivery is most likely to prevail when agencies: (1) consciously explore the implications of each of the equity options available; (2) monitor and understand existing service distribution patterns; (3) negotiate equity model priorities for leisure services among decision-making groups; and (4) establish distributional objectives which reflect the negotiated preferred equity models.
References


Beal vs. Lindsay, (468 F.2d 287 [2d Cir. 1972]).


Vernez, G.S. (1976) Notes on alternative conceptions of equity, paper prepared for presentation in the lecture series Equity in the City, Columbia University, Continuing Education Program.


Outdoor Recreation and Recreation: Studies in Outdoor Recreation
R.E. Manning (Oregon State University), 166 pages, $11.95 (ISBN 0135907004)

Outdoor Recreation
L. Pigram (Croom Helm, Ke 262 pages, £16.95 (ISBN 0 631 09115 5)

The quest for understanding the great epics which pass into leisure research in particular, epic search. Often these attribute rare essences and essential at synthesis (Studies in Outc exercise nonetheless. Stung by attempted to assess the utrimental management of outdoor rece British standards the body of his review to North America.

The collation of research i logical order the attempts to participation surveys; to iden participation; to measure the organize these data within co Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) The chronology helps the re understanding of why people From all this endeavour, outdoor recreation managen pressive. For example, management environments; that the recreation; that such diversity about what people feel rather available for managing outdoor cynical managerial so-what? P; can be made to appear trivial. I achievement of this kind of rese

Leisure Studies 7 (1988) 305–310 0