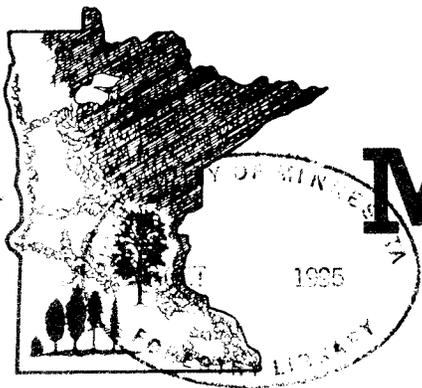


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TYPES OF CAMPING IN TWO MINNESOTA AREAS: A STUDY OF PREFERENCE INTENSITY<sup>1/</sup>  
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User preferences in outdoor recreation are viewed today as important considerations in land management and planning decisions. While the nature and range of preferences have been quite widely studied the intensity of preference (i.e., how strongly a person feels about an attitude or preference) has been largely overlooked. Because this may be an important dimension of user preferences, a measure of intensity of preference for camping was included in a 1967 study of users at St. Croix State Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), Minnesota.

### Study Methods

St. Croix State Park, located near Hinckley, Minnesota along the St. Croix River, provides developed and partially developed camping. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area, a million-acre semi-wilderness canoe area in northern Minnesota, provides primitive camping with minor developments (tables, grates, and pit toilets) on some campsites. During the summer of 1967 interviews were conducted at St. Croix State Park by the senior author and in the BWCA by S. F. McCool. For a complete discussion of sampling, interviewing, scale reliability and validity, etc. see references (2) and (3).

The study used a scale designed to measure camping preference and intensity of preference. It was patterned after the Sherif and Sherif attitude measurement scale (1). The scale was pretested at the Park and necessary changes were made before its use in the main study.

Respondents were given the following nine statements ranging from extreme preference for developed camping to extreme preference for primitive camping:

1. I won't go camping unless I can be fairly sure I will find a fully developed, modernized campground.
2. I find much greater satisfaction camping in developed campgrounds than in primitive camping areas.
3. I find somewhat greater satisfaction camping in relatively developed campgrounds than in relatively primitive campgrounds.

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4. It is hard to decide whether the satisfactions I receive from camping are affected much by the amount of development but I generally prefer developed campgrounds.
5. It is hard to decide whether I prefer developed or primitive campgrounds.
6. It is hard to decide whether the satisfactions I receive from camping are affected much by the amount of development, but I generally prefer primitive camping areas.
7. I find somewhat greater satisfaction camping in relatively primitive camping areas than in relatively developed campgrounds.
8. I find much greater satisfaction camping in primitive camping areas than in developed campgrounds.
9. Most of the time, I won't go camping unless I can camp in primitive, undeveloped areas.

They were asked to indicate the statement they agreed with the most. This is termed the respondent's Own Position and forms the anchoring point for identifying a person's preference. Respondents were then asked to indicate the statement they disagreed with the most and any other statements they disagreed with or agreed with. For any Own Position the number of positions agreed with formed the Zone of Acceptance (ZOA); the number of positions disagreed with formed the Zone of Rejection (ZOR); and the number of positions left unmarked formed the Zone of Indifference (ZOI). Thus the pattern and range of the attitude was measured.

Sherif and Sherif found in their studies testing the validity of this type of scale that the ZOR forms a valid measure of a person's involvement in attitude. They did this by correlating the ZOR with external objective measures of involvement and commitment. The greater the ZOR, the more involved the person is in the attitude or preference.

Further tests of the ZOR as a valid measure of involvement demonstrated that outside variables, such as level of education, were not affecting the number of positions rejected. Validity and reliability of the camping preference scale were examined and found to be adequate. Expressions of preference correlated with external objective measures of behavior.

### Study Results

In general, persons who adopted more extreme Own Positions tended to be more highly involved in their preferences (i.e. tended to reject more positions), regardless of the nature (developed or primitive) of the preference. Persons who adopted the neutral position (position #5) were the least involved in their selection.

It was hypothesized that people with primitive preferences would be more involved in their preference than people with developed preferences. This hypothesis was not only rejected but the reverse hypothesis was statistically significant. When all persons in the sample are considered together it appears that it is more important to persons who prefer developed camping to have developments than it is for those who prefer primitive camping not to have developments.

Underlying the original hypothesis had been the assumption that persons who preferred primitive camping would have more naturalistic reasons for camping, and thus a high involvement in having a naturalistic camping area, than would those who preferred developed camping. When this assumption was examined empirically, however, no significant relationship was found between camping preference and naturalistic-unnaturalistic reasons for camping.

This suggests that there are at least four distinct types of campers: (1) campers who prefer developed campgrounds and have unnaturalistic reasons (fun, saves money, etc.) for camping (developed-unnaturalistic), (2) campers who prefer developed campgrounds but have naturalistic reasons for going camping (developed-naturalistic), (3) campers who prefer primitive camping areas and have naturalistic reasons for camping (primitive-naturalistic), and (4) campers who prefer primitive camping but have unnaturalistic reasons for camping, (primitive-unnaturalistic).

When these four types were compared on involvement in their preferences some interesting results emerged.

- (1) Primitive-naturalistic campers tended to be more involved in their preference than primitive unnaturalistic campers.
- (2) Developed-unnaturalistic campers were no more involved in their preferences than developed-naturalistic campers.
- (3) Primitive-naturalistic and developed-naturalistic campers were equally involved in their preferences.
- (4) Developed-unnaturalistic campers were more involved in their preference than primitive-naturalistic campers.

Whether a person had naturalistic or unnaturalistic motives for camping made a difference in the involvement on preferences for primitive camping but not for involvement in preferences for developed camping. From findings 3 and 4 above it can be seen that the initial correlation between developed preferences and greater involvement in preference was true only for persons with unnaturalistic motivations for camping.

Despite the fact that BWCA campers preferred primitive camping and had more naturalistic motivations for camping, St. Croix campers who preferred primitive camping and camped closer to urban areas (perhaps due to lack of adequate time or resources to travel farther) may have had their desires frustrated more than those who were able to travel to the more primitive spots. This may have caused them to reject more positions. BWCA campers were not frustrated in this way and tended to remain indifferent to a greater number of positions.

The four camper types differed on various socio-economic variables. Primitive-naturalistic campers tended to be those in the younger stages of the family life cycle. Primitive-unnaturalistic, developed-unnaturalistic, and developed-naturalistic types tended to be those in the later child rearing stages of the family life cycle.

Primitive-naturalistic campers had the highest level of education. Developed-unnaturalistic campers had the lowest educational attainment. Primitive-unnaturalistic and developed-naturalistic campers were intermediate. Relationships with occupational status followed the same pattern.

There was no difference between the four types on urban-rural residence. However, those who preferred primitive styles of camping tended to come from urban areas.

### Implications

This study supports the argument for the construction of various types of campgrounds to satisfy varying tastes. But this study goes beyond the demonstration of various tastes and indicates that persons have varying involvements in those preferences.

From the study results it can be suggested that it is more important for primitive-naturalistic campers to have primitive developments in more naturally aesthetic surroundings than it is for primitive-unnaturalistic campers. It is equally important for both developed-unnaturalistic and developed-naturalistic campers to have modern developments but the latter would benefit more from having these developments in more aesthetic natural surroundings.

It is equally important for primitive-naturalistic campers to have a lack of developments as it is for developed-naturalistic campers to have developments. It is more important for developed-unnaturalistic campers to have developments than it is for primitive-unnaturalistic campers to have a lack of developments.

These findings suggest that state parks, which probably contain more beautiful natural surroundings than other public and private recreational lands, should be placing a greater emphasis on providing for developed-naturalistic and primitive-naturalistic campers. The quality of the natural scene would not be so important to the other camping types as would be the opportunity for "recreation" activities. Private campgrounds with developed recreational facilities might be able to cater profitably and efficiently to the needs of developed-unnaturalistic campers. For that type of camp the quality of the natural scene, except for the presence of a body of water, may not be so important.

The fact that campers with primitive preferences who camped at St. Croix Park were equally or more involved in having primitive camping areas than were BWCA campers suggests that more attention should be given to providing some semblance of a primitive outing experience closer to urban centers. From the socio-economic findings it could be suggested that young, highly educated, professional, urban people with little time or money tend to be the primitive-naturalistic camper type who love the natural outdoors but who may not always be able to travel to the distant primitive areas.

### Literature Cited

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