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DOWNSHIFTING, LEISURE MEANINGS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN LEISURE

A Dissertation in

Leisure Studies

by

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This study was undertaken with the purposes of exploring meanings of leisure prevalent amongst career downshifters and to better understand changes in their leisure consequential to their career downshift. Using this information an initial evaluation of whether downshifting can help regain the essence of leisure was made.

Twenty-seven participants were purposively selected and interviewed in an open-ended question format, either in person or over the telephone. They had varying degrees of experience of downshifting, came from and went to a multitude of different careers, and lived across the United States. They were asked questions about what leisure meant to them, and how leisure had transformed since their career change. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and read multiple times, to identify common patterns and themes and to develop answers to the research questions.

The results affirmed that leisure is a subjective word that contains numerous meanings for different people. There is considerable overlap between the general meanings of leisure that evolved from this set of participants and leisure meanings that have been described by leisure researchers previously, out of a downshifting context. A variety of transformations in leisure associated with downshifting emerged. Overall downshifting was instrumental in stimulating a whole spectrum of changes in the value of leisure. The data collected for this study suggests that downshifters partially regain the essence of leisure, according to the criteria set out by Juniu (2000). Discussion of pre and
post-downshift leisure experiences confirmed Linder’s (1970) theory that harried leisure detracts satisfaction from the overall experience of leisure.

Continued research investigating transformations in leisure, work/leisure values, and lifestyles associated with downshifting is recommended. It will provide insight into personal, family and health costs related to extreme jobs / workaholism, identify policy issues for bodies devoted to ensuring safe and healthy work environments, and help in identifying pertinent issues designed to measure development.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Career downshifting in its most rudimentary form is a trade off. Downshifters voluntarily choose to leave or change professional careers, and consequently reduce their income, in a trade that ultimately gives them more control over their personal time and what they perceive to be a more balanced lifestyle. This study is devoted to understanding what leisure means to people who make such career changes and to explore possible transformations in the way downshifters experience and think of leisure. A comprehensive research question is stated in the final section of this chapter to provide clear purpose for this study.

By exploring the meanings that downshifters ascribe to leisure, how their leisure experiences change and if their meanings change after downshifting, this study provides important insight for the field of leisure studies and contributes to the work-leisure relationships theoretical base. Situated meanings of leisure, and why leisure choices are made, remain essential and largely unexplored questions for leisure studies (Coalter, 2000). Focusing on a subset of the population who may be making lifestyle decisions to prioritize leisure over work allows us to glimpse into the future, maybe even seeing the birth of radical changes in the values of work and leisure. Reliable estimates of the percentage of the working age population in the United States who have downshifted are hard to come by, in the years 1990 through 1996 an estimated 20% of all adult Americans downshifted (Schor, 1998). The Center for a New American Dream estimated in 2004,
that 48% of the working age population had, within the last 5 years voluntarily made changes in their lives which resulted in making less income (CNAD, 2004). In Australia and Britain, estimates of 20% to 25% respectively of the working age population downshifted within the last 10 years when surveyed in 2003, (Hamilton & Mail, 2003; Hamilton, 2003; Hamilton & Breakspear 2004). The Worldwide Institute suggests the number of downshifters is imprecise, but it suggests that interest in downshifting appears to be growing, “… in seven European countries, the number of people who have voluntarily reduced their working hours has grown at 5.3 percent each year over the past five years, for example. And the trend toward simplicity is expected to continue” (Worldwatch Institute, 2004, retrieved from http://www.worldwatch.org/node/815). With more and more people deciding to downshift it will be important to understand whether leisure takes on different meanings for them compared to non-downshifters. From a human resources perspective, downshifting is causing organizations to rethink traditional notions of work and work arrangements. It is forcing companies to expand their definitions of success for their employees, including components such as employee motivation and the pursuit of individual happiness. Downshifting is recognized in human resources as taking success beyond work-life balancing (Gandolfi, 2005).

In addition to developing an understanding of what leisure means to downshifters, identifying transformations in their meanings and leisure experiences, this study also provides glimpses of the capability of downshifting to affect various outcomes. Outcomes which have been investigated and speculated on by several researchers and authors, such as: does downshifting help to regain the essence of leisure? (Juniu, 2000), can downshifters relearn the value of leisure after downshifting? (Saltzman, 1991), and what
is the effect on leisure of slowing down the tempo of life (Linder, 1970, Godbey, 2003)? The specific research question driving this study is articulated in the final section of this chapter.

The latest generation of downshifters that has been researched (essentially from the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia) has a notable characteristic that distinguishes them from their predecessors. Today’s downshifters are more mainstream; they could be, nurses, teachers, university professors, administrators, salespeople or self-employed. They are less likely, however, to be radicals living in hippy communes, nor members of hardcore anti-consumerists cults, or society dropouts (Schor, 1992).

Conventional downshifters represent a growing minority of people with a mindset of taking more control over their lives, by prioritizing the use and control of their time and de-prioritizing their financial / social status and material gain (Hamilton & Mail, 2003; Hamilton, 2003; Hamilton & Breakspear 2004; Schor, 1998; Saltzman, 1991).

The following chapters proceed first with the literature review. In this, work-leisure relationships are briefly discussed to provide a theoretical grounding for this study. Where traditional ways of investigating work and leisure within the leisure studies discipline are described, and the common work leisure relationships explained. Understanding the role of downshifting on leisure fills an important gap in the current work-leisure literature, this is discussed to provide a basis for conducting this study.

The motivation to downshift and the extent of how many people do it and what type of people do it, has received considerable amounts of research effort, albeit with a strong European, North American, and Australian bias (Schor, 1998; Hamilton & Mail, 2003; Hamilton & Breakspear, 2004; Ghazi & Jones, 2004). However, the focus of this body of
research rarely probes into the leisure lives of downshifters and transformations that may have occurred in the way they think about leisure after their career changes. This study continues to examine North American downshifters, but attempts to develop our knowledge base of them by articulating meanings they ascribe to leisure, changes in their leisure experiences and changes in their meanings of leisure.

Godbey (2003) noted that Linder observed, back in the 1960s, that consumption takes time, leading to the following assertion, “… the process of consuming must be sped up--by consuming more rapidly, by consuming higher quality versions of a product or service or by simultaneous consumption in which one consumed more than one thing at a time. Such an acceleration of consumption led to an acceleration of the pace of life and a harried leisure class.” (p.478). Downshifters make lifestyle changes whether they are aware of it or not, that could potentially alleviate harried leisure and regain some of the pleasure that Linder observes is lost through an increased life tempo. Do downshifters change their harried leisure lifestyles and learn to relax and enjoy their leisure more? This is a question that several researchers have alluded to, directly with Juniu’s (2000) question of “whether downshifting offers the chance to regain the essence of leisure” (pp.69-72) and indirectly with Saltzman’s (1991) observation “…..For many [people after downshifting] they have to relearn the value of leisure” (p.38). This study attempts to clarify whether downshifting does lead to regaining the essence of leisure according to the criteria set out by Juniu (2000), and whether downshifters regain some of the lost pleasure associated with harried leisure (Linder, 1970).
This study will add to literature in the leisure studies field related to work-leisure relationships; meanings of leisure; transformations in leisure; and expand the literature on downshifting.

The literature review continues by explaining conventional definitions of downshifting and a brief history of simple living is included to trace the antecedents of downshifting and thus provide a historical context to view contemporary downshifting. Further elements of downshifting explained are its manifestation (in the West) and motivations to do it.

Meanings of leisure have been thoroughly researched in the academic field of leisure studies from various perspectives: psychological, sociological, and historical to name but a few. Each study develops meanings couched in its own disciplinary nomenclature, sometimes complimentary and sometimes critical. Researchers have also endeavored to capture everyday meanings of leisure (Havighurst, 1957; Donald & Havighurst, 1959; Freysinger, 1995; Shaw 1985; Brook, 1993; Jump, 2005), although question marks remain about the reliability of such studies (Shaw, 1985). The literature reviewed for this study appraises contemporary leisure definitions and highlights, common associations with leisure.

The research methods chapter follows the literature review. It outlines the rationale for choosing a qualitative interpretative approach and describes the methods used to gather and analyze the data.

The results are presented in the next chapter, including biographies of the participants and the themes that emerged from analyzing their interviews which are pertinent to answering the research questions stated below in the final section of this chapter.
Finally the discussion chapter summarizes the themes, opens a dialogue up about interesting points from the results, highlights the limitations of the study and suggests ways to extend this line of research.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT – STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This research is related to work-leisure relationships theory in the leisure studies literature. The research problem of this study is comprised of three core elements. First, the study sets out to explore meanings of leisure among career downshifters. Secondly, it endeavors to highlight transformations in leisure for downshifters following their career changes, such as how their leisure experiences have changed since their downshift. Finally, the third objective is to identify whether changes in the meanings of leisure occur for downshifters, and (1) whether these changes are directly related to the downshift, and (2) whether they represent a regaining of the essence of leisure, as postulated by Juniu (2000). Where Juniu’s (2000) impression of a leisure that has regained its essence is summarized by leisure that is: socially centered; dedicated towards personal development and contemplation; and free of the compulsive need to buy or consume it (pp. 71-72).
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research problems of this study concern balancing work and leisure, and theoretically the study is grounded in the domain of work-leisure relationships. Therefore an overview of the common theories describing work leisure relationships is provided.

One of the main objectives of this study is to develop an understanding of the changes in experiences of leisure that downshifters encounter following their career changes and likewise whether the meanings of leisure changes for them as well. Juniu (2000) addressed these potential changes with her article questioning whether downshifting can lead to the essence of leisure being regained (pp. 69-72). Several of these issues are reviewed and are used to develop a gauge which can provide an evaluation of whether downshifting does lead to the essence of leisure being regained.

This is followed by an in-depth summary of downshifting, tracing its history, current manifestation and types of downshifting changes. Considering this study also endeavors to understand meanings of leisure amongst downshifters, conventional definitions and meanings of leisure from the leisure studies literature is described briefly to provide contextual setting.
WORK AND LEISURE

Leisure behavior and its relationship to work have been researched in various forms in several academic disciplines. The two principal ways work and leisure have been investigated together are: (1) analyzing the relationship between leisure participation and occupation based socio-economic groups, and (2) identifying and describing work leisure relationships (Mannell & Reid, 1999; Veal, 2004). Research based on leisure participation according to socio-economic status has a long history, typically focusing on objective measures to compare results statistically between classes. Measures such as socio-economic status (for instance determined by salary) and the number of hours dedicated to specified leisure activities and the number of hours dedicated to work (Veal, 2004).

Wilensky (1960) is often credited as being one of the key researchers who theorized the ‘spillover’ and ‘compensation’ work leisure relationships related to the influence of work on leisure (Mannell & Reid, 1999). However, Wilensky did not put forward these theories himself, he was summarizing and commenting on the work of his contemporary researchers and critics of industrialism during the 1960s (Veal, 2004). With the spillover leisure theory, Wilensky (1960) proposed alienation at work leads to alienation at or in leisure, where “the mental stultification produced by his labor permeates his (sic) leisure” (p.544). The compensation leisure theory, on the other hand proposed that the worker, would leave his (sic) “deadening rhythms of factory life” (Wilensky, 1960, p.544) and compensate for it with an explosive hedonistic exciting leisure routine.
Expanding upon the theories of spillover and compensation, Wilensky (1960) introduced the ‘fusion’ and ‘segmentation’ hypotheses. Segmentation postulated a stronger (than compensation) split between work and leisure, that resulted in ‘interpersonal and intra-psychic strain and social instability’ (Wilensky, 1960, p.546). Fusion inferred an amalgamation of work and leisure, resulting in work becoming more play-like, and leisure more work-like.

Wilensky’s theorizing about spillover / compensation and segmentation / fusion was not based on his own empirical research, rather those of his contemporaries. However, his own research was based on two groups, those employed in work with careers and those employed in work with little or no career. Unfortunately Wilensky’s empirical research was very speculative, focusing on broad social structural issues rather than meaningful leisure issues (Veal, 2004).

The typology of work leisure relationships was further expanded upon by Parker, who added another type of relationship, which is referred to under various guises as neutrality, segmentation, compartmentalization, separateness, and containment (Parker, 1983; Veal, 2004). A neutral relationship indicates there is no relationship between leisure and work: one’s leisure is chosen independently of one’s work. This is similar to the socialization theory postulated by Chick and Hood from their research on machinists in Pennsylvania (Chick and Hood, 1996).
DOWNSHIFTING & LEISURE

There are several ‘how to’ type books describing the experiences of downshifters, but their focus tends to be on methods of downshifting, motivations for downshifting and financial considerations after downshifting (Saltzman, 1991; Dominguez & Robin, 1992; Drake, 2000; and Ghazi & Jones, 2004). What is missing from the literature is analysis and description of downshifters’ leisure and any transformations in their leisure that follow their career changes. For instance, Ghazi and Jones’s chapter “Leisure and Pleasure” in their guide book for downshifting is a ten point guide for “cheap thrills and lasting pleasure” (Ghazi & Jones, 2004, p.229), it offers nothing more than a checklist of possible things downshifters can do with their extra time. Saltzman (1991) touches on the issue of leisure in her book about downshifters, noting that “for many [referring to downshifters after they have made the change], that has meant relearning the value of leisure” (p.38), but she doesn’t expand upon this, her efforts are primarily focused on the different ways of changing jobs or downshifting. Hamilton (2003) on his own and with several research associates (Hamilton & Mail, 2003; Hamilton & Breakspear, 2004) have done a sound job of identifying motivations for downshifting, (and for not downshifting), ways of doing it, and the extent of downshifting in England and Australia. Schor (1998) has been instrumental in determining the extent of downshifting in the United States, where her efforts tend to focus on the way of changing careers and survival after the change but again little attention is paid to the leisure lifestyles of downshifters.

The dearth of literature addressing the issue of leisure and downshifting is underscored with Juniu’s (2000) article, where she poses the question whether
Downshifting can regain the essence of leisure (p.69). Juniu (2000) suggests that leisure in [our] post modern consumer culture has lost its historical sense of freedom, that it was portrayed to have in ancient Greece, Rome and Medieval times (p.71). Her critique premised on the philosophy of Hemingway and Habermas, advocates that leisure in post modern society has been deformed resulting in its commodification and consumerism. Consumerization that has devoid leisure its historical sense of freedom, whereby it “is no longer a time for personal growth and contemplation, nor a time for social utilization” (Juniu, 2000, p.71). Juniu (2000) suggests that post modern leisure has transformed, now championing the materialistic lifestyle, it is individualistic, involves exchange relationships rather than social interaction to foster communication and equal sharing (pp. 71-72).

Downshifting, Juniu (2000) speculates, is a possible means of regaining the essence of leisure; whereby the sense of freedom is recovered, creativity and sociability are recovered, the compulsive need to buy leisure diminishes, leisure once again becomes an arena for personal growth and contemplation, and a work-to-live philosophy surpasses the live-to-work philosophy (p.72).

Downshifting and leisure are also pertinent to the ‘Harried Leisure Class’ that Linder observed back in the 1960s and 70s. Linder’s observations were based on his realization that traditionally economists did not account for consumption taking time. He postulated that as higher rates of productivity were attained consumption of the output had to increase. This led to the conclusion that people would feel rushed and endeavor to increase the yield on a unit of time in all non essential domains of life, leading to time
deepening and multi-tasking. This outcome, Linder suggested would result in less enjoyment in such domains as leisure (Godbey, 2003; Linder, 1970).

Downshifting can be thought of as the antithesis of harried leisure. Downshifters do not rationalize their work (and leisure) for economic growth; they’re new benchmark for success is optimized well being. By investigating the meaning of leisure and leisure transformations of people who have chosen to downshift provides us with an opportunity to validate Linder’s concept of harried leisure. It can also help to evaluate the capability of downshifting to revive the lost pleasure/satisfaction associated with harried leisure.

**DOWNSHIFTING – Historical Context and Definition**

Downshifting is a process different to that of retirement. The major difference, and for the purpose of this study it is assumed, downshifting is a process that can occur any time between 25 to 59 years of age, as compared to retirement which traditionally in Western culture occurs after the age of sixty.

Amy Saltzman first made reference to the term in 1991 using it in the title of her book – “Downshifting: Reinventing success on a slower track”, to describe the phenomenon of people making non conventional career choices to take more control of their lives (Saltzman, 1991). However, the practice of downshifting, albeit something partially resembling downshifting, has been recognized long before Saltzman’s (1991) work. Historically, roots of downshifting can be seen in Eastern and Western cultures through simple living. In the East, records indicate as far back as the second millennium BC, Hindu groups adopted lifestyles with strong voluntary simplified spiritual overtones.
(Elgin & Mitchell, 1977; Shi, 1985). In the West, records show the philosophies of
Epicurus were popular around the fourth century BC to the third century AD (Elgin &
Mitchell, 1977; Shi, 1985, Goodale & Godbey, 1988). One of the founding principles of
Epicureanism was the troubles associated with maintaining an extravagant lifestyle tend
to outweigh the pleasure of partaking in it. Which led to the simplified lifestyle doctrine:
what is necessary for happiness, bodily comfort and life itself should be maintained at
minimal cost, while all things beyond what is necessary for these should either be
tempered by moderation or completely avoided (Goodale & Godbey, 1988). Antecedents
of voluntary simplified living in North America can be seen in the practices of religious
groups such as the Amish, Shakers, Quakers and Mennonites, particularly their practices

All the elements of voluntary simplicity but without religious overtones pervade
throughout the canonical book of Henry David Thoreau’s - Walden. Thoreau, along with
Ralph Emerson, were considered utopian idealists in the mid 1800s, where they were
instrumental in forming the transcendentalist philosophy, which was premised on simple
and sustainable living (Shi, 1985; Elgin, 1998; Schor, 1998).

During the period after the First World War up until the mid 1980s, several
prominent authors advocated theory and practices of voluntary simplified living. Among
the most disseminated authors, Ralph Borsodi and Scott Nearing are acclaimed voluntary
simplicity economists and practitioners. Richard Gregg, known as a Gandhian, penned
‘The Value of Voluntary Simplicity’ in 1936, Duane Elgin, published his seminal book
‘Voluntary Simplicity’ in 1981 and David Shi wrote ‘Simple Life: Plain Living and High
Thinking in American Culture’ in 1985. Finally, during the 1990s the highly influential book ‘Your Money or Your Life’ was written by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin in 1992.

Downshifting is often considered a milder form of voluntary simplicity, as this next section explains. Conventional downshifters have been defined as “… people who made a long term voluntary change in their lifestyle, other than planned retirement, which resulted in them earning less money” (Schor, 1998, p. 22). Hamilton and Mail (2003) added to this definition with a consumption component, “… Downshifters are those people who make a voluntary, long-term lifestyle change that involves accepting significantly less income and consuming less” (p. 7-8).

Downshifting as an expression is often used interchangeably with several similar terms in the media which blurs the subtle nuances between the different terms (Hamilton & Mail, 2003). Thus, ‘voluntary simplicity’, ‘sea-changers’, and ‘cultural creatives’ have often and still are interchanged with downshifting. The common tie between these terms is that each describes a voluntary choice to create a simpler, more balanced lifestyle. The nuances in the terminology relate either to the degree of change (in income and consumption) put into practice, or to the actual change itself.

Generally, it can be noted that there is a scale of downshifting, researchers along with social observers have indicated that the scale is indicative of the varying degrees to which people are willing to change. At the lower end of the scale (least change) is downshifting and at the other end voluntary simplicity (significant changes) (Etzioni, 1998; Hamilton & Mail, 2003; Hamilton & Breakspear, 2004; Schor, 1998).
DOWNSHIFTING - Manifestation

There has been limited research about the extent to which the phenomenon of downshifting occurs. There is an increasing academic and corporate interest in downshifting due to its increasing prevalence (Gandolfi, 2005; Hamilton & Breakspear, 2004), but consistent longitudinal data estimates of the percentage of the working population engaged in downshifting is sparse in the public domain. Research estimates the extent of downshifting in several wealthy societies at almost a fifth to nearly half of the adult working population (Schor, 1998; Hamilton, 2003; Center for a New American Dream, 2004). Etzioni’s understanding of the manifestation of downshifting is highlighted with the following metaphor [where in referring to voluntary simplicity he also implies downshifting], he writes “Voluntary simplicity is thus a choice a successful lawyer, not a homeless person faces: Singapore, not Rwanda” (Etzioni, 1998, p.632). This metaphor highlights a critical issue of downshifting, it is a process practiced primarily by those free to choose their standard of living, whilst the poor do not have a choice (Shi, 1985; Etzioni, 1998).

The disjointed longitudinal data that do exist estimates the extent of downshifting in North American, British and Australian populations. The Harwood Group conducted a survey in February 1995, working with Schor to operationalize downshifting and formulate several of the survey questions. The survey estimated 28% of the sample had voluntarily downshifted in the last five years (Harwood Group, 1995). Schor commissioned a second survey in November 1995 and her analysis showed that 19% (± 3.5 percentage points) of all adult Americans made a voluntary lifestyle change that
entailed earning less money, other than a scheduled retirement between the years 1990 to 1996 (Schor, 1998).

The Center for a New American Dream (CNAD) commissioned a survey in the summer of 2004 using similar questions to Schor’s original survey and found that 48% (± 3.5 percentage points) of the American adult population had voluntarily made changes that resembled a downshift (CNAD, 2004).

Working through The Australia Institute, Hamilton commissioned a proportionally stratified random sample in Australia (2002) to estimate the extent of the phenomenon there. Using slightly different criteria questions to Schor’s survey, (Hamilton limited his sample frame to include only those between 30 to 59 years of age, and asked whether their downshift decision had been made in the last ten years) he established that twenty-three per cent (23%) of this age demographic in Australia had voluntarily downshifted (Hamilton & Mail, 2003).

Hamilton identifies numerous estimates of the extent of downshifting in Britain, citing the most recent estimate available from Datamonitor (prior to his research) as suggesting the number of downshifters increased from 1.7 million in 1997 to 2.6 million in 2002 (Hamilton, 2003). Using similar criteria to that of his Australian survey, Hamilton commissioned a survey on the British population in October 2003, and found that 25% of the sample in the age group 30 to 59 downshifted.

The following table summarizes these estimates of downshifters as percentages of a denoted adult population.
Table 1: Estimates of the extent of Downshifting, USA, Australia and British National estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage of Population who are Downshifters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1995</td>
<td>Harwood Group</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>* 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1995</td>
<td>Schor</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>* 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2004</td>
<td>CNAD</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>* 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2002</td>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Mail</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>** 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2003</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>** 25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on an adult population identified as 18 years and older

** Based on an adult population between the ages of 30 to 59 years of age

Looking at additional demographic characteristics for other dimensions of the manifestation of downshifting (based on Hamilton, Schor, Harwood Group and CNAD), there tends to be little international consensus on gender preferences to downshift. Schor and the Harwood Group report male and female ratios within their surveys, with a higher ratio of females downshifting than males (Schor, 1998; Harwood Group, 1995). Hamilton et al.’s indicate the percentage of either men or women that were classified under their definition of downshifting likely to downshift in the population. Their results indicate males were more likely to downshift in Australia and females were more likely to downshift in Britain (Hamilton, 2003; Hamilton & Mail, 2003). These data
appear to indicate slight regional variations in the propensity to downshift across genders. However, a reasonable conclusion would be that the mixed results generally indicate that women are just as likely as men to downshift in the Western world. Table 2 summarizes the gender data collected from the various sources.

Table 2: Gender composite of downshifters in USA, Australia and Britain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Gender of Downshifters</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1995</td>
<td>Harwood Group</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1995</td>
<td>Schor</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2004</td>
<td>CNAD</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2002</td>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Mail</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>* 25%</td>
<td>* 21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2003</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>* 23%</td>
<td>* 27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This represents the percentage of men/women that were classified under Hamilton’s narrow definition of downshifters out of the whole sample.

There are also mixed results reported for other demographic variables such as age, pre-downshift incomes and whether or not the downshifters have children. Table 3 below summarizes such data.
Table 3: Various demographic compositions of downshifters in USA, Australia & UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Pre-Downshift incomes</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Have Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harwood, 1995</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schor, 1995</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNAD, 2004</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton &amp; Mail, 2002</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton, 2003</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The various ways in which people choose to downshift can be seen in Table 4. There are other lifestyle adjustments than simply work lifestyle changes that downshifters experience. With a reduced income, pre-downshift lifestyles cannot be maintained, and research has identified clothing, food and vacations to be the other main areas of adjustment in addition to work.

Typical adjustments made to food consumption habits involve downshifters eating out at expensive restaurants much less, eating in and having time to cook meals at home (Hamilton, 2003; Schor, 1998; DeGraaf, 1997). Vacations are adjusted differently.
amongst downshifters, according to generation variances, however almost all of them sacrifice taking expensive five star vacations. Where the older generation of downshifters are more likely to vacate within their own country for short durations, the younger generation are more likely to use their lifestyle change as an opportunity for extensive worldwide travel, for periods of several months or even more (Hamilton & Breakspear, 2004).

Table 4: Types of Downshifter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Notable Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Makes significant lifestyle changes and adopts voluntary simplicity philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplifier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Changer</td>
<td>Moves locations from expensive desirable area to less fashionable area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Plateauer</td>
<td>Refuses promotions at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Tracker</td>
<td>Takes promotion but returns back to original position, or lesser position because of additional time consuming responsibilities associated with the promoted job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Shifter</td>
<td>Changes career entirely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employer</td>
<td>Leaves paid work for a company to work for oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Escapee</td>
<td>Leaves high cost urban area to live in cheaper rural area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DOWNSHIFTING – Motivation: Why people downshift

Downshifters usually decide to downshift on the basis of several compounding factors and very rarely on just one issue. The Center for a New American Dream (CNAD) conducted a survey during the summer 2004, polling Americans about their values, particularly work and consumer values. The results from the survey revealed that ninety-three percent (93%) of those polled believe Americans are too focused on working and making money and not enough on family and community (CNAD, 2004). Given this self acknowledgement of “out-of-whack” priorities, it should come as little surprise that one of the primary reasons given to justify downshifting is to achieve a more balanced lifestyle (Hamilton, 2004). When asked to nominate primary reasons for deciding to downshift, four dominant themes emerged: (1) the desire for a more balanced life; (2) because of a clash between personal values and those of the workplace; (3) a search for a more fulfilling life; and (4) because of health issues (Hamilton & Breakspear, 2004).

Interestingly, Hamilton and Breakspear (2004) also conducted focus groups with people who had considered downshifting but did not do so. The researchers identified three common factors leading to this conclusion as: (1) fear of financial stability, (2) fear of losing social standing within the community and (3) fear of making the change for selfish reasons.
LEISURE – Contemporary Definitions

What is Leisure? Perhaps it is best to realize that there is no correct answer...

Definitions are what people make of them. – John Neulinger, 1974

Leisure in the context of modern society (from a Western perspective) is normally associated with free time or recreational activities. ‘Leisure’ as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is:

“... (opportunity to do, of, afforded by) free time, time at one’s own disposal.”

Associating leisure with merely free time, or simply an activity fails to capture the full essence of leisure, a conclusion that numerous researchers have arrived at over the past 40 or so years of leisure research (Kelly, 1983; Parker, 1983; Esteve et al., 1999; Pavelka, 2000; Henderson et al., 2001). Cumulative knowledge from the discipline of leisure studies indicates that there is no single definition for leisure (Kelly, 1983; Parker, 1983; Hamilton-Smith, 1992; Esteve et al., 1999; Henderson et al., 2001; Lequin, 2002), essentially because of its subjective, dialectic and dynamic nature.

Godbey provides a philosophical definition,

“Leisure is living in relative freedom from the external compulsive forces of one’s culture and physical environment so as to be able to act from internally compelling love in ways which are personally pleasing, intuitively worthwhile, and provide a basis for faith”. (Goodale & Godbey, 1988)

One of the paradoxes of leisure is its dialectic nature. That is leisure is often defined in terms of its opposites, for instance leisure as free time, but time is constricted,
or the classic dialectic is leisure is defined as time away from work. This defines what leisure is not but it does not capture much of what leisure really is.

Several of the most common definitions of leisure frame it in terms of: (1) time, notably free time, (2) activity, (3) state of mind, (4) state of being, (5) as an experience, (6) as a cultural construct, (7) as a form of social control (8) travel-escape, (9) time away from work, (10) recreation, (11) balance, and (12) idleness (Shaw, 1985; Hamilton-Smith, 1999; Esteve et al, 1999; Henderson et al, 2001; Pavelka, 2000).

**LEISURE – Associations**

Leisure is defined in terms of many domains, time, body, mind, space, culture, society, motivation and so on. This translates into numerous meanings or associations, and provided below is a non-exhaustive list of several words or phrases that have been strongly correlated with leisure.

Table 5: Leisure Associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common associations with Leisure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discretionary time availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived freedom (freedom of choice)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEISURE – Meanings of leisure in everyday life

What does leisure mean beyond an academic context, that is, what meanings does leisure invoke for the non academic, theoretical constructs aside. Researchers have adopted numerous methods to describe what leisure means to ordinary people in everyday settings, such as asking participants to define leisure (Neulinger, 1981; Young & Wilmott, 1973), examining the values and satisfactions associated with leisure (Donald & Havighurst, 1959; Esteve et al, 1990), empirical testing of specific factors believed to be associated with leisure (Kelly, 1999; Iso-Ahola, 1999), examining specific real life situations of work and leisure (Shaw, 1985; Freysinger, 1995; Jump, 2005) and differentiating between value meanings of leisure and frequency of occurrence meanings (Brook, 1993). The findings of this body of research area highlight several pertinent issues.

The first issue is that although clearly recognized by academia to be a complex concept, leisure to the ordinary person is very much a simplified concept synonymous with fun, enjoyment and pleasure. It elicits responses such as “I like it for the pleasure of doing it, that’s all” and “it makes time pass” (Donald & Havighurst, 1959, p.359). Shaw’s research designed to elicit personal meanings of leisure identified enjoyment as a critical dimension in leisure (Shaw, 1985), as did Brook’s research, which showed enjoyment to be the most important factor in describing non-work (leisure) situations done most frequently (Brook, 1993).

The second important issue is the elitist connotation of the word ‘leisure’. This is traceable back to Veblen’s (1899) juxtaposition of leisure with the upper classes and their
conspicuous consumption. However, leisure amongst contemporary middle and lower classes is often scoffed at (by themselves) with the insinuation that they are not good enough or can ill afford ‘leisure’ (Chick & Hood, 1996).

A third pertinent issue discussed by Shaw is that of the nature of the answer elicited from participants when asking them to define leisure. She questions the reliability of simply asking participants to define leisure, saying that there is no way to determine whether participants answer this line of questioning from their personal perspective or what they perceive to be society norms and thus they provide ‘correct’ answers, which may not actually reflect their personal beliefs.

In short, it is valuable to recognize that academic definitions of leisure will not always match leisure definitions of laypersons, and because of the subservient status of leisure to work leisure may even be marginalized amongst laypeople.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter highlighted the ambiguity of the word leisure. Leisure initially appears to be a relatively simple concept premised in enjoyment, yet in trying to define it, the concept expands exponentially into an ever increasing sophisticated subjective idea with numerous associations such as free time, activity, experience, cultural sensitivity and opposition to work. Further elements that have been strongly correlated with leisure are: enjoyment, perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation, lack of evaluation, social interaction, relaxation, relation to work and discretionary time availability. In addition to mere fun
and enjoyment a critical element of leisure that pervades through these associations is that leisure has a strong dialectic nature.

The definition of leisure cannot be completely delimited. For instance, Pavelka’s argument against the conception of leisure as merely free time rather “leisure is not so much about time as it is about the personal meaning of time” (Pavelka, 2000, p.25) highlights the key issue in defining leisure. Namely, that leisure is subjective in nature, and defining something that is subjective will always remain an ambiguous task.

Everyday meanings of leisure have been explored by researchers, who have identified essential characteristics as freedom of choice, intrinsic motivation, enjoyment, relaxation and lack of obligation and lack of evaluation (Donald & Havighurst, 1959; Neulinger, 1980; Shaw, 1985; Brook, 1993; Esteve et al, 1999).

Downshifting essentially describes the process of voluntarily making a career change that results in having more control over one’s time at the cost of a reduced income. Historically, downshifting has its roots in the simple living, voluntary simplicity philosophy that can be traced thousands of years back to the likes of Epicurus and relatively more recently related to the transcendentalists (Shi, 1985; Elgin, 1998; Schor, 1998). It is a phenomenon that has been observed in Western societies with apparently an increasing prevalence (Harwood Group, 1985; Schor, 1998; Hamilton, 2003; CNAD, 2004). There is little evidence to suggest that downshifting occurs in other less developed parts of the world, partially because very few researchers have addressed this issue and also because the nature of downshifting tends to restrict it to a practice associated with that of populations from developed nations.
Subtle variations exist in defining what a downshifter is. For instance, Schor (1998) and Hamilton (2003, 2004,) differ in their age limits, but the overall theme remains constant. That is, a downshifter makes a voluntary lifestyle change, excluding a regularly scheduled retirement, which entails earning less money.

Contemporary Western research reveals that people downshift in many different ways: selling expensive property to move to a less desirable property, changing jobs, reducing hours in the same job, refusing career promotions, or giving up work entirely to name a few. Surprisingly, the distribution of downshifters across income levels is more dispersed than expected, with a higher representation of people classified as middle income than high income making downshifting changes (Hamilton, 2003). The data collected to date also indicates no specific gender bias towards downshifting; men are just as likely to downshift as women are in Western society (Schor, 1998; Hamilton & Breakspear, 2004; Hamilton, 2003).

This study attempts to fill the void in research literature relating downshifting and leisure, by providing in-depth analysis of what leisure means to downshifters and covering ways in which leisure changes for downshifters following their career changes. This analysis is theoretically grounded within work-leisure relationships and will add to this body of literature in addition to providing answers to issues such as downshifting helping to regain the essence of leisure and leisure satisfaction compromised by harried leisure
Chapter 3

METHODS

The objectives of this study were, first, to develop a comprehensive understanding of the meanings of leisure for people who voluntarily chose to make unconventional career decisions, second, to gauge how leisure changed for these people, and third, to identify whether the downshift lead to changes in their meanings of leisure. If changes in the meaning of leisure were prevalent, this study also endeavored to (i) relate those changes with the downshifting career change, and (ii) see if the change represented a regaining of the essence of leisure (as postulated by Juniu, 2000 - such as leisure being more socially / community orientated, and less consumptive orientated). Given these objectives, this chapter outlines my personal beliefs about the optimal way to collect and process information to answer such questions.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides support for a rationale partial towards using an interpretative qualitative paradigm to answer the research questions posed in this study. A description of the method and procedures used to collect and analyze the data follows. This includes the pre-interview processes of establishing participant-selection-criteria, participant recruitment, development of the interview protocol and the post-interview
data analysis. Finally the techniques employed to assess the quality of the data collected and its interpretation is discussed.

Understanding the meaning of leisure for any individual, nationality, culture or population, as already mentioned in the literature review, is a difficult task (Donald & Havighurst, 1959; Brooks, 1993; Shaw, 1985; Esteve et al, 1999). With no precise definition, the word ‘leisure’ can have several connotations for one individual and it can have numerous permutations for that same person throughout their lives. However, one constant with leisure is that it is inherently a very subjective word.

Questions about personal meanings of leisure have typically been de-prioritized, because they are inherently difficult to operationalize with clear constructs (Harper, 1981; Watkins, 2000). However, operationalizing leisure as a subjective phenomenon, as Lequin (2002) advocates, and numerous other researchers do likewise (Pavelka, 2000; Samdahl, 1999; Dupuis, 1999; Howe, 1985), then semi-structured qualitative interviews based on open-ended type questions, provide an effective paradigm for capturing personal descriptions of leisure. The open-ended nature of such questions also provides research participants an opportunity to articulate exactly what leisure means to them in their own words and from their own viewpoints, with limited impositions of the researcher’s assumptions dictating the way they answer (Creswell, 1994; Howe, 1985).

Further, Creswell (1998) and Harper (1981) provide support that a qualitative approach is better suited for asking questions about meanings of leisure. Both authors agree that it is the ‘what’ or ‘how’ types of question that a qualitative research design will prevail with, whereas a quantitative approach is more appropriate for the ‘whether’ and
‘why’ types of research questions (Creswell, 1998; Harper, 1981). The primary research problems of the present study are of the ‘what’ genre, paraphrasing the research problems as: “what does leisure mean to downshifters?” and “if the meaning of leisure changes for downshifters?” accentuates this point.

Whilst research about leisure dimensions of downshifting is still in its infancy relatively speaking (Hamilton, 2003), the flexibility of qualitative interviews using open-ended type questions provides increased scope to explore downshifters meanings of leisure as compared to a well planned survey based on closed ended type questions (Creswell, 1998). Foreseeing multiple meanings and interpretations of leisure from the research participants, is precisely one of the benefits of qualitative research according to Winchester (2001), “Qualitative research tends to emphasize multiple meanings and interpretations rather than seeking to impose any one dominant or ‘correct’ interpretation” (p.6).

It was envisaged that the ambiguous nature of leisure would be problematic for pure closed-ended survey based data collection. Thus, using closed-ended type questions could potentially obscure important meanings that downshifters have personally constructed of or about leisure.

With an ever increasing focus of investigation on downshifting (Tan, 2000; Schor, 1998; CNAD, 2004; Hamilton, 2003) there is still a relative dearth of research investigating downshifters’ leisure, especially what leisure means for them, so the current study’s topic of investigation is essentially exploratory. The qualitative paradigm is best
suited when a topic needs to be explored and to present detailed, wide angled viewpoints (Creswell, 1998).

**SAMPLING – type and size**

Participants were selected if they met certain criteria. The technical term for such sampling is “purposive sampling” (Patton, 1990; Henderson, 1991; Trochim, 2001). Essential criteria for this study were that the participants voluntarily chose to downshift away from their chosen career path. The selection criteria are detailed more precisely in the following section.

Normally, under ideal circumstances one would be led by “theoretical saturation” when deciding upon a suitable sample size for a research problem using purposive sampling (Sandelowski, 1995; Fossey et al., 2002). However, Guest et al (2006) contest the over-reliance on saturation, claiming that although the concept is useful, saturation has been poorly operationalized and in practical terms it offers little tangible guidance to deciding how many participants should be included in a sample. Further, Guest et al (2006) estimate 12 interviews are sufficient to reach theoretical saturation, based on their evaluation of 60 in-depth interviews with women from two West African countries in a research experiment investigating degrees of theoretical saturation (Guest et al. 2006). Whilst documenting the degree of saturation during their coding, the researchers actually found the first elements of saturation to appear as early as the sixth interview (Guest et al., 2006). Their estimate of 12 participants provides a useful benchmark figure for estimating the number of expected participants in order to reveal a good degree of
theoretical saturation. With this benchmark in mind, I proposed a sample size of 12 to 15 in-depth interviews with downshifters for this study. However, this figure was deemed to be too low during the proposal discussion with my committee members, and based on their esteemed suggestion along with guidelines from previous studies (Schor, 1998; Hewlett & Buck Luce, 2006) a sample range of 25 to 30 participants was settled upon to be suitable in providing sufficient data for meaningful discussion and conclusions.

Two other limitations restricting how many participants should be included in the study’s sample were: time and money. The cost was mitigated considerably by having the flexibility to interview participants over the telephone as well as in person. This considerably broadened the sampling frame.

To establish an estimate of time requirements and question pertinence several pilot interviews were conducted. These interviews ranged between 35 to 50 minutes in length and took in the region of 4 to 5 hours to transcribe. Thus, the considerable amount of time associated with interviewing, transcribing and interpreting qualitative data did have a significant bearing on the sample size chosen for this study.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION CRITERIA

Following approval from my dissertation committee, the head of the Department of the Recreation, Park and Tourism Management at the Pennsylvania State University and the Penn State Institutional Review Board (IRB) I recruited career downshifters for this study through a variety of methods. Individuals were asked to participate in the study
if they met all of the following criteria (derived from Harriman, 1982; Schor, 1998; and Hamilton, 2003):

1. They voluntarily chose to make a long term career decision that entailed them earning less money (excluding a regularly scheduled retirement) and as a consequence attained more control of their time (be it work or leisure time).

2. They were professional or managerial employees, whose jobs demanded a high commitment and investment in a career.

3. Their voluntary decision entailed an income reduction, which represented a substantial deviation from established practices in the occupation that they downshifted away from.

4. When making the change they were between the ages of 25 to 59 years.

5. They did not have to necessarily be American citizens, but they were required to be familiar with and assimilated into American culture and society. This was desired as some form of control to limit cultural heterogeneity grossly affecting deviation across the participants’ answers.

RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

Initially, geographically speaking, I expected to recruit the majority of my study participants from the local State College area. However, during the proposal meeting it was suggested that over reliance on State College area participants would inevitably lead to strongly diminished scope and generalization capability of the study. It was insinuated that the majority of downshifters in the State College vicinity would probably be middle aged white males (given State College’s somewhat homogeneous demographic). This
concern however was circumnavigated by refining the study proposal to allow for interviews to be conducted over the telephone as well as in person and this significantly enhanced the participant sampling frame.

Recruitment started locally (State College) by word of mouth, asking friends, colleagues and acquaintances if they knew of anyone closely resembling the profile of a downshifter. I also identified numerous organizations linked to varying themes of downshifting. I contacted key members (usually via email); requesting leads to potential participants (see Appendix A).

In total, 27 interviews were conducted between October 8th 2006 and January 29th 2007. Nearly three quarters (74%) of these participants were recruited through my personal network of friends and colleagues, typically along the lines of a friend of a friend type basis. Just under one fifth (19%) were recruited through requests for participation recruitment messages placed on forums of organization websites, namely ‘Take Back your Time’ (http://www.timeday.org/contact.asp) and the ‘Shorter work Time’ group (http://www.swt.org/) and the remainder of interviews were by serendipitous chance meeting.

**PRE-INTERVIEW / INTERVIEW PROCESS**

Initial contact was made with potential participants via email. A brief synopsis of the purpose of the study and its objectives were stated and the selection criteria were explicitly declared (Appendix B). Once confirmed that the potential participant could be considered a valid downshifter and he/she was willing to participate I then sent him/her
an email message with two attachments, a pre-interview questionnaire (Appendix C) and a letter of informed consent (Appendix D). My instructions were to read the letter of informed consent, make sure that they agreed to participate, print it out, sign and then post it to me (I supplied a SAE), then finally to read and complete the pre-interview questionnaire.

The purpose of the pre-interview questionnaire was to provide me with some background information about the participants, such as places they’ve lived, their current and previous occupation, income levels, marital status, number of children, and their educational attainment. It also included some questions that were designed to galvanize the participants into thinking a little deeper about their leisure before and after their downshift.

The interview protocol was established (see Appendix E) in conjunction with my dissertation committee advisor. It was an iterative process, requiring several rounds of question refinement, initially between my advisor and myself and it culminated in being pilot tested on three test participants. The data and protocol were reviewed after each interview, fine tuned and then the next interview was conducted with the modified version.

When I received the signed letter of informed consent and completed pre-interview questionnaire from a participant, an interview date, time and place was established. Financial and logistical constraints lead to 15% of the interviews being conducted in person, whilst 85% were conducted over the phone. Each interview was recorded using an Olympus WS-100 digital voice recorder. If the interview was
conducted over the phone, my cell phone with loudspeaker capability was used, thus enabling the voice recorder to capture the entire conversation.

The in-person interviews were conducted in a variety of places, one was at a participant’s home, one was at my home, one was downtown (State College) in a coffee shop and one was done at the participant’s workplace.

**THE INTERVIEW**

Interviews commenced usually with five to ten minutes small talk, typically about how we each knew the person that had introduced me to them. Then I would briefly go over the purpose of my study and reiterate some pertinent points about privacy from the letter of informed consent, ensuring that the participants knew that I was recording the interview and their anonymity was assured. I also asked their permission for a follow-up interview in case there were any points that needed clarification, maybe for interpretation issues, or whether I just wanted to probe deeper into a subject that arose during the interview. At this point they had all read and signed the letter of informed consent and were aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions that they did not want to.

The interview in earnest then began, starting with questions about the participant’s downshift. The next set of questions was very general, asking what typical weekdays and weekends were like, and how leisure fitted into their weekly schedule. Followed up by more specific leisure related questions such as, what sort of leisure activities were done in and out of their homes. Each question in the present had a
counterpart in the past, for instance, if they were asked to describe a typical weekday now (after downshifting); they were also asked to describe a typical weekday in the past before they downshifted. With the intention of directly drawing out personal meanings of leisure, the participants were asked to define leisure and discuss the role of leisure in their lives. The focus then shifted to a particular type of leisure, that of vacations, where they were asked to describe a typical vacation before and after their downshift. The interview then moved into questions aimed to directly identify changes in leisure. The participants were asked to comment directly on any differences in the way they experienced leisure before and after their downshift. Issues of social and community engagement through leisure and personal development related to leisure were also discussed to probe Juniu’s (2000) proposition. Then consumption changes were investigated, with the participants answering questions about changes in how they spent their income on leisure services and goods. Finally, the participants were asked whether leisure had become more meaningful to them.

DATA ANALYSIS

Although there is varying consensus about what a specific phase entails in qualitative data analysis, numerous authors refer to overarching phases, which interact cyclically within a qualitative data analysis. The phases that were evident in this study were: (1) classifying data (data reduction), (2) theme construction, (3) making connections, and (4) conveying the message (conclusion drawing & verification) (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Henderson, 1991; Freysinger, 1995; Baptiste, 2001). The data
analysis and interpretation was a perpetually iterative process that started during the first interview.

Phase 1, data reduction, involved several core activities, (i) ‘tagging’ the data, and (ii) labeling the data, where,

“Tagging refers to the process of selecting from an amorphous body of material, bits and pieces that satisfy the researcher’s curiosity, and help support the purpose of the study. Unless everything one "collects" and records is considered relevant and important (a rather rare, and frightening prospect), one must decide to count as important certain pieces of data and discount (if not completely reject) others. Labeling (i.e., assigning some distinguishing mark to selected data) is always an aspect of tagging. Labels may come from the data itself, or they may be imposed from outside. Labels may be meaningfully related to the data or mere heuristic devices. As such, labels may be images, numbers, symbols, words, phrases, themes, etc” (Baptiste, 2001, p.8).

This translated into reading through the data to find relevant comments from the participants about their leisure, what leisure meant to them, the role of leisure in their lives, how it [leisure] changed if at all after their downshift, and whether they thought changes in their leisure were attributable to downshifting (or something else). In addition to reading the transcripts for sentences relevant to the aforementioned concepts, other emergent tags were also noted and labeled.

Generally, this process presented a fair challenge, and it resulted in reducing the total number of transcription pages from 360+ pages to 125 pages of tagged data.

Phase 2, theme construction, followed after all the interviews were tagged and labeled. I placed the labels into similar groups or categories. Categories appear in the research literature under numerous guises, such as constructs, concepts, variables and
themes. They can be mutually exclusive or overlapping, exhaustive or incomplete, but in
general, a category is a word or phrase that glues together a set of objects or events with
similar characteristics (Baptiste, 2001).

It was a taxing phase in the analysis, for it required sifting through the tags,
constantly comparing for cohesion to construct cohesive themes. Several times the tags
and labels were revisited to develop more relevant themes. This iterative procedure
required “deciding whether and where particular tagged units fit; whether to discard,
discount, narrow, expand, split, join, transfer, etc., previously tagged data; and whether
to discard, discount, narrow, expand, split, join, refine, re-define, etc., previously
constructed categories. This is a messy process that goes back and forth between the four
intellectual moments—tagging, labeling, defining, and refining” (Baptiste, 2001, p.8).

This fluid analytical approach is commonly referred to as the constant comparative
method in qualitative data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Overall, this process presented a stern challenge, the first round of tagging and
labeling resulted in the construction of over seventy labels. After the constant
comparative process of refining the tags, labels and classifications, the number of labels
used for the final analysis was reduced significantly.

Making connections between the labels to construct cohesive themes constituted
the main effort of Phase 3 in an effort to provide answers to the research questions and
gain an understanding of the big picture. Conceptual maps were used to aid this process;
and are a useful tool for looking at the ‘big picture’ to clarify the interrelatedness of all
the themes and labels (Svantesson & Svantesson, 1990).
Phase 4, conveying the message (conclusion drawing & verification) is one of the more creative processes within qualitative data analysis. It takes the analysis beyond simple glossaries, adding “richness, insightfulness, and depth of understanding.” (Baptiste, 2001, p.9), which can elevate the research beyond simply telling subjects and readers what they already know. By making connections between the themes and developing contextualized stories or theories the researcher aims to “help his/her subjects and readers understand more broadly and deeply their experiences” (Baptiste, 2001, p.9). These four phases are recognized as being intimately related and having fluid boundaries.

Discussion of the specific steps taken during the analysis will now be outlined. I started analyzing (in a limited way) even during the data collection, whilst conducting and transcribing the interviews. Using a log book, interesting points raised by the participants were noted down, and as more interviews were conducted, familiar labels such as organic lifestyles, no real change in leisure meaning, working in less isolated more social environments started to emerge. This process of informal tagging continued throughout interview transcription. After the first couple of interviews several of the questions in the interview probe were either refined or just omitted from further interviews.

While it was labor intensive and sometimes tedious, transcription of the interviews enabled personal reflection, closeness to the data, identification of early patterns and the opportunity to identify ambiguous points. Thus it was an invaluable step in building momentum for a comprehensive analysis. The transcripts were printed out in
hard copy format and were read multiple times. On the first reading of all the combined transcripts, I tagged sections of text and comments in red. On the second reading, I read the interviews in a different order to avoid familiarity issues while attempting to keep a fresh outlook on the data. Tagging, along with additional comments, were made in green. It was during this reading that several key tags, classifications and even themes started to solidify in my mind. After completing the second round of transcript reading, I returned to the research questions and closely reviewed the main issues to clarify my research objectives. Also before the third reading, a brief stock taking of tags / labels / themes was done to introduce some notion of structure to the accumulating tags and labels. Then during the third round of reading, highlighted texts were given priority and made note of in my research journal. Going from one participants’ interview to the next, each tag or highlighted section was considered on its own merit and either placed under a new heading or spliced together with tags from other participants. In this way, evidence for a label from all the interviews could be amalgamated and consolidated. The amalgamation process consisted of cutting relevant labels from an interview and pasting them into a separate file, in this way series of files were constructed consisting of quotes from different participants with a common thread.

Labels were typically three to five words long and where possible were derived from the wording of the participants themselves. This had the important function of keeping the interpretation genuine and in non-academic terms thus more readily accessible to a wider audience. It also aided the member check process, enabling the
participants that contributed to the member checks to better understand the interpretations.

With a healthy quota of labels and my research questions in mind, I embarked on a more formal theme development process. Using the constant comparison method, similarities between several labels emerged and helped to classify useful pertinent themes for answering the research questions. For example, one theme such as “Organic Lifestyle” was composed of several labels such as “integrated lifestyle”, “work can now be scheduled around leisure”, “work overlaps with leisure” and “life is more spontaneous”.

Some labels in themselves provided rich feedback to certain research questions without obvious interaction with other labels, and thus these labels turned into themes of their own. For example the label ‘more energy’ was relevant to the changes in leisure question, but no other labels fitted closely with it. Whereas the theme ‘less pressure’ was also relevant to the changes in leisure question and it was composed of several labels (rare commodity, more relaxed, less rushed, less intense etc).

As mentioned earlier, themes and labels were not developed through enumeration or frequency of occurrence but, rather, the constant comparison technique was utilized to develop themes. Conceptual maps provided a useful visual way of tracking where themes or labels emerged from in the data-base; this was done by attaching a participant’s name and associated line/page reference number from their interview for that theme. This in turn led to a theme surrounded by a selection of relevant participants names and interview location numbers. This provided a quick reference to determine where to retrieve relevant
quotes from later in the reporting stage. Some themes were surrounded by numerous names and other themes had sparse references, thus presenting visual feedback on which themes occurred most frequently.

RESEARCH QUALITY

Qualitative researchers usually refer to measurement terminology that “adhere more to naturalistic axioms” (Creswell, 1998, p.197), using terms such as trustworthiness and authenticity as their criteria for judging research quality (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Henderson, 1991; Dupuis, 1999).

Trustworthiness, when operationalized uses terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Creswell, 1998). These terms, rightly or wrongly are often compared to their quantitative cousins, where the following comparisons are typically made:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Credibility} & \sim \text{Internal validity} \\
\text{Transferability} & \sim \text{External validity} \\
\text{Dependability} & \sim \text{Reliability} \\
\text{Conformability} & \sim \text{Objectivity}
\end{align*}
\]

Although these comparisons are useful in building a defendable position, for instance when qualitative researchers explain their research to quantitative researchers, it should be noted that the difference between the philosophical assumptions each paradigm is developed upon means that the terms cannot be directly translated (Lincoln and Guba,
1985; Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). Thus the direct translation of credibility is not exactly the same as internal validity because the ontological and epistemological assumptions are different for quantitative and qualitative philosophies.

**RESEARCH QUALITY - CREDIBILITY**

Lincoln and Guba discuss credibility in terms of research’s believability of the representations of the phenomena. Thus it is important to know how data was collected, how the interpretations were formed and how the interpretations were presented. Qualitative researchers have devised several strategies to ensure credibility, the methods used for this study include triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, thick description, and prolonged engagement (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990; Henderson, 1991).

**CREDIBILITY – Triangulation**

Triangulation is a process of using various methods to investigate the same phenomena (Trochim, 2001). Due to limited resources the prospect of using multiple methods to collect data for this study was off limits. I did however triangulate with participant selection, thus ensuring an even selection of male and female participants, who emanated from various professions, had varying degrees of experience of downshifting and were from a variety of age ranges.
CREDIBILITY - Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing is an important technique to enhance research credibility because it exposes assumptions and conclusions that might otherwise be overlooked (Trochim, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Henderson, 1991). For instance, a researcher may prematurely jump to conclusions based on his or her bias and force the interpretation to fit this bias and fit nicely into his or her research agenda. However, there is a dearth of specifics when it comes to who to actually use as a “debriefer”, when to do the debriefing and how to do the debriefing (Spillet, 2003). In this study, I utilized a relatively simple debriefing structure. Apart from some minor debriefing with my dissertation committee advisor about the pertinence of data collected from pilot interviews, all the remaining debriefing centered on the data analysis and interpretation. For this I discussed my findings with two academic colleagues from the linguistics department and one non academic friend.

CREDIBILITY - Member checking

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) member checking is the most important technique for establishing credibility in qualitative research. Others refer to member checking as adding ‘rigor’ in naturalistic research (Hoffart, 1991; Lietz et al, 2006). The execution of this credibility enhancing measure was similar to that of the peer debriefing process, except the member checking was more comprehensive and it was conducted with key participants from the study. During the data collection, several participants registered a genuine interest in the study and indicated their willingness to...
help out beyond the initial interview. I sent several participants an explanation of what would be required of them and after reviewing the necessary steps required for the member checking role, two participants agreed to assist me with this process. Each participant was sent an information package to review which included:

- A brief outline of the study and its objectives
- A one page summary of their interview with me and my interpretations from this interview
- A table with all of my relevant labels and themes derived from the whole data set
- My results and interpretations from all interviews related to answering the research questions.

We agreed that each key participant would have two weeks to review the information package and then an interview was scheduled to review the interpretations. Although this process felt like opening a can of worms, the increased perspective and discussion it facilitated was invaluable and overall I considered it truly enhanced the credibility of my interpretations. Wallendorf and Belk’s (1989) recognition that issues of contention arising during member checking do not automatically justify revising the interpretations. They recognized that participants involved in the member checking process may not be privy to all of the information relevant to the phenomenon under study. In addition, a participant maybe unable to bracket his or her own personal bias out, if for instance the majority of the other participants held a consensus view and the member checking participant actually held a contrary viewpoint. Suffice to say, that the
The member checking process is not an absolute, it merely acts as a guide and reality check. The procedure was valuable in identifying areas in the results and interpretation that were valuable, irrelevant and sketchy.

**CREDIBILITY - Thick description**

Thick description is a very important idea in qualitative research. Ponterotto explains that virtually every major textbook on qualitative research published in the last 30 years has included at least one or more entries under “thick description” (Ponterotto, 2006, p.538). However well established the importance of “thick description” is, the actual execution and practice of thick description has been a little muddled. Ponterotto identifies two primary reasons for this confusion surrounding thick description, the first is its evolution across intellectual disciplines (anthropology, sociology, psychology, communications, and education) and the second is that there is no unified definition. “Thick description” was used to enhance the credibility of this study in the following ways:

Participants – each participant was described fully, of course without compromising their anonymity. This included describing demographic characteristics, work careers and leisure perceptions.

Procedures – the procedures used during data collection, the length and location of the interview and recording techniques, mine and the interviewee’s reactions to questions.

Results – thick description in my results chapter was achieved by providing adequate “voice” of the participants, effectively including long sections of the interview and in
some cases my question that prompted the participants response. This is especially useful to see the participants’ voice in context.

Discussion – thick description within the discussion entailed merging the participants lived experiences with my interpretations of their experiences. So as to illuminate the reader of this study as to why the interpretations were made and hopefully lead them to understand why I made such interpretations.

TRANSFERABILITY

The issue of transferability refers to the extent that results and interpretations from research can be generalized externally beyond the sample selected for this study. Naturally different philosophical persuasions regard generalization differently. The steps taken in this study to ensure transferability are similar to those described for credibility, they are to detail my research methods, and make explicit the context, assumptions and bias that underlie the interpretations. By doing this, the decision to generalize is deferred to the reader rather than doing it myself. Beyond the “thick description” already mentioned previously in the credibility measure, extensive notes and reflections were recorded in my research journal. Transferability is naturally limited by the purposive sample that was used for this study.
DEPENDABILITY

The key word for dependability is context. By providing ample context for every step of this study enhances the dependability of it. Like the previous two quality measures (transferability, credibility), context is driven by thick descriptions (in methods and analysis and discussion)

CONFORMABILITY

The member checking process described in the credibility measure also ensured that the study had a degree of conformability and was conducted in a systematic and careful manner.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Fully transcribed, all the interviews when combined represented a knowledge base of over 370 pages of data (12-point double spaced). The average number of pages for each transcript was 14 pages, the shortest interview produced 7 pages of typed text and the longest interview yielded 22 pages of typed text. The three interrelated phases of data analysis commonly associated with qualitative data, noted as (1) classifying data, (2) making connections between data, (3) conveying the message(s) (Baptiste, 2001) are reported on in this chapter. These phases are synonymous with the ‘cyclic interaction’ outlined by Freysinger (1995) as (1) data reduction, (2) data display, (3) conclusion drawing and verification (p.65).

This chapter proceeds with profiles of each participant interviewed including: their marital status; number of children; how long ago they downshifted and the duration they’ve been working in their new careers; what profession was left and what are their current jobs; the particulars associated with the change, including estimated reductions in income and work time commitments; an assessment of the degree of their downshift i.e. whether they are long-term lifestyle ‘bona fide’ downshifters or whether they are ‘tentative’ short term downshifters, and to what degree their career change was voluntary and finally a brief outline of the role of leisure in their lives. Following this, the data classification phase (data reduction) is reported. These are the labels that emerged from the data analysis. And finally the chapter concludes by outlining the themes that were constructed from the labels, whereby, labels were woven together with similar labels to
construct themes which provided coherent answers to the research questions posed by this study.

Profile of the Knowledge Base

Twenty-seven downshifters were interviewed for this study, thirteen females and fourteen males. Eighty-five percent (23) of the participants conducted the interview over the phone, whilst the other fifteen percent (4) were interviewed personally either in their home, at my house, or in their work office. Sixty-three percent of the participants (17) were married, and thirty-seven percent (10) indicated they were not married. The majority of this sample did not have children (18), as compared to nine (9) participants who had families with children. There is admittedly a very strong sampling bias with respect to the amount of education each participant experienced. Namely all but one participant attained at least a bachelor’s degree level education. Five (5) participants held bachelor’s degrees, eleven (11) reached master’s degree level and ten (10) persevered through to doctorate level. Seven (7) participants indicated that their current place of dwelling is rural, eight (8) believed they lived in a suburban setting and twelve (12) participants designated an urban living environment. The age distribution of the participants can be seen in the table 6.

Table 6: Age Distribution of Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>25-30</th>
<th>31-35</th>
<th>36-40</th>
<th>41-45</th>
<th>46-50</th>
<th>51-55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of participants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In an effort to limit cultural heterogeneity producing wildly divergent themes for this study, a restriction was imposed during participant recruitment. This restriction entailed that the participants were intimately involved with American culture, they had lived in the States for at least five years and they were well acclimatized into American society. Seventy eight per cent of this study’s sample (21) was American and six (6) were non-nationals (or legal aliens). The origins of the non nationals were: Canada, England, Dominican Republic, India, Israel and Jamaica. Two American nationals were interviewed and their downshifts led them to relocating outside of the United States, one to a small Caribbean island and the other moving to Germany.

Table 7 summarizes several pertinent data for each participant, including their careers they had before and after downshifting, and the geographical dimensions related to their career choices.

In all of the biographies pseudonyms have been used to protect the privacy of the participants and ensure their anonymity. Quotes from the participants’ interviews have been used to add genuine context. In these situations, I have used the participants’ pseudonym.
Table 7: Background information about Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Married / Single / Divorced</th>
<th># of children</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>CAREER BEFORE</th>
<th>CAREER AFTER</th>
<th>Location BEFORE</th>
<th>Location AFTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Aguchi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Senior ‘IT’ consultant</td>
<td>Sales &amp; customer support</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Balata</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Cosmetics consultant</td>
<td>Administrative assistant</td>
<td>NY/FL</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Callaloo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Telecoms executive / Sales &amp; customer support</td>
<td>University professor</td>
<td>ISRAEL</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ent</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Teacher / consultant</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>CA / OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Flim</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>Private health sector consultant</td>
<td>Public health worker</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>AT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Dougla</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Software developer</td>
<td>Self employed</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Gyul</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Chief financial officer</td>
<td>Building own house</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Hasecara</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Economics consultant</td>
<td>University professor</td>
<td>PA / DC</td>
<td>TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Irie</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>1-55</td>
<td>Accountant / sales representative</td>
<td>Tennis instructor</td>
<td>JAMAICA</td>
<td>FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jouvert</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>Corporate trainer</td>
<td>Entrepreneur / writer / marketer</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Kaiser</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>31-55</td>
<td>Marketing director</td>
<td>Grad student / professor</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>Married / single /divorced</td>
<td># of children</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>CAREER BEFORE</td>
<td>CAREER AFTER</td>
<td>Location BEFORE</td>
<td>Location AFTER</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Limer</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Export manager /director Indian environmental agency</td>
<td>University professor</td>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>PA / TN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Maracas</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>Diplomat</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>CARIBBEAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Naranga</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Electrical engineer</td>
<td>Tennis instructor</td>
<td>NM / CO</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Oman</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Public school teacher</td>
<td>Grad student / professor</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Pelau</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>In-house legal counsel</td>
<td>Lawyer / independent book publisher / documentary producer</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Quidat</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Maritime archaeologist</td>
<td>Grad student / professor</td>
<td>TN + VARIOUS</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Razzam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Commodity trader</td>
<td>Non profit management</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Soucouyant</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Sales - financial services</td>
<td>Sales - financial services</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Tabanca</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>University professor</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>PA / FL / GERMANY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Tabanca</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Underwater diver /teacher</td>
<td>Tennis instructor</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>PA / FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Unitas</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>Marketing executive</td>
<td>Photographers rep</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>Married / single /divorced</td>
<td># of children</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>CAREER BEFORE</td>
<td>CAREER AFTER</td>
<td>Location BEFORE</td>
<td>Location AFTER</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Vaps</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>Magazine writer</td>
<td>IL / CA</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Whewhe</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Attorney - private firm</td>
<td>Attorney - state agency</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Xante</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>Manufacturing engineer</td>
<td>Math teacher</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Yuhtink</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Middle school teacher</td>
<td>Yoga instructor</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Zico</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Senior marketing manager</td>
<td>Business owner / journalist / producer</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>WA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Participants

To gather some personal information about each participant, they were asked to complete a pre-interview questionnaire (see Appendix C). This was used together with information gleaned from their interviews, to construct the following biographies and ultimately provide deeper contextual understanding about each participant.

Mrs. Aguchi

Mrs. Aguchi worked in the Information Technology field for over eleven years, before downshifting five years ago. At the time of interview she had just started a part-time job working as a sales and customer support manager in a consulting company focused on work-life balance. Prior to this, she used her law degree on a part-time basis consulting on issue advocacy work. Her highest level of education attained is a doctorate in law and she also has an MBA. She is in her late forties, married and is the mother of three children. Before downshifting, her income was in the $60-75k per annum bracket, after downshifting her average income is in the $20-30k per annum bracket, with an approximate 44% reduction in hours. As well as being part of a working couple with two children, and an average total commute time of just under four hours a day, Mrs. Aguchi’s downshift was motivated by the birth of her third child and the prickly issue of maternity leave, with her company basically refusing to allow her maternity leave. She now thoroughly appreciates part time work and can never see herself sacrificing so much as she did before downshifting for such a demanding role. “It’s not like I gained
something that’s optional, it’s .... its like I stopped cutting off something that’s essential -
I couldn’t live without the part of my life that I had to amputate to do a full time job.”

[Mrs. Aguchi, 381-383].

Mrs. Aguchi lives and works in Minnesota, as she did before she downshifted. She is considered a bona fide downshifter because she voluntarily traded income, and reduced her work hours to gain more control over her time. Within the Saltzman typology of downshifters, Mrs. Aguchi would be recognized as a career shifter.

When discussing the role of leisure in her life, several dominant themes emerged. Primarily she believed leisure time is for the family. Although appreciating the moments when her spouse or daycare took responsibility of the children and she “… didn’t have to be mummy, mummy, mummy!” [Mrs., Aguchi, 136], she took great pride in being able to take her children to their various activities and to be involved with their lives. Secondly, although she did not consider it as leisure initially, interacting within her community provides her a great deal of satisfaction and enjoyment. Finally, just being able to read and diversify her mind also was an important part of her life that leisure facilitates. “I really treasure the times when they are under somebody else’s care and I can re-group and think and organize. But...when they are around its fun and when I get to read that’s fun and when I get to be involved in my community that’s really fun – I ran for office three years ago, I ran for state legislature and I enjoyed everything about it except the losing!” [Mrs. Aguchi, 258-262].
Ms. Balata

Ms. Balata is a single woman in her mid to late forties with no children or dependents. After obtaining a bachelors level degree she went on to develop new products and consult for over twenty three years in the cosmetics / fragrance industry, where she became very successful, earning in the $150 – 250k per annum income bracket. She is now an administrative assistant and has been so for five years. Her downshift entailed taking an approximate 75% income reduction (she earns between $45-$60k per annum now) for an estimated 20% reduction in working hours and a lot less stress. The decision to change careers was motivated by a combination of events, “… it was shortly before 9/11, and I lost my father, he had been ill for a long time, and between the death of my father and 9/11 I decided I was working WAY too many hours – not getting the satisfaction at my job and I decided to, instead of stay in the cosmetics business, I decided to just work as a secretary.” [Ms. Balata, 32-36].

Ms. Balata now lives and works in New York, where she grew up. Previously she also worked in New York but had a stint of the Miami lifestyle whilst she was working in the cosmetics industry. She is considered a bona fide downshifter because she voluntarily chose to reduce hours and salary in order to reduce the stress in her life and have much more control over her time. In terms of the Saltzman’s typology, she falls under the career shifter category.

Leisure is an imperative in her life, it provides opportunities for her to relax, to be creative and to de-stress. However, this was not always the case, “[Leisure] is very important to me now, because I went for many years without having a lot of time for it.” Ms. Balata, 49-50].
Mr. Callaloo

Mr. Callaloo is a professor at a large university in the north eastern United States. He is in is early forties, married and is father to four children. Having earned a doctorate Mr. Callaloo worked as an academic for several years, before “upshifting” to work as an executive in the telecom industry in Israel for four years and then in a law firm for two years. His motivation to downshift was a combination of several factors, his wife was a journalist who also worked “crazy” hours and they had four young children that both Mr. and Mrs. Callaloo wanted to invest more time with. He recounted a pertinent story about working late into the wee hours in the morning of his daughter’s fifth birthday. “... so this was my first year in the corporate world, I bought her a bicycle and we kept it in my car so she wouldn’t see me bringing it into the house. It was three a.m. in the morning of her birthday and I was still in the office and I said to my supervisor, I said “I’ve got to go home now, its T’s birthday”. So I picked up and drove home and I put the bike in her room and I drove back to work, that was an hour each way okay, so by six a.m. in the morning I was back at work and when my daughter woke up, I wasn’t there to see her eyes. So by then I already knew that this was not something that I could NOT do in the long term, this is not the kind of life I want to have.” [Mr. Callaloo, 43-54].

In 2004 he downshifted to rejoin academia as a professor in the United States, in doing so he almost halved the number of hours dedicated to work. Mr. Callaloo did not reveal salary information, but assured me he had taken a substantial reduction with this career change. His downshift relocated him and his family out of Israel to where they currently live now, in Pennsylvania.
Although, he refrained from revealing income details, Mr. Callaloo is still considered a bona fide downshifter. His career change was a voluntary choice, he has gained more control over his time and during the interview he referred to his academic position paying substantially less than the telecom executive role [Mr. Callaloo, 225-226]. Within the Saltzman classification, Mr. Callaloo is a career shifter.

Mr. Callaloo defined leisure as, “my free time, where I can make decisions for myself about how I spend my time.” [Mr. Callaloo, 190-191]. As a father of four, his time away from work is often dedicated to shuttling his children to and fro for a plethora of activities, “... its [leisure] mostly just staying around the house, tomorrow I’m taking my son to see a movie, this afternoon I’m taking him to taekwon-do, tomorrow my daughter has ice skating, then Sunday my other son has soccer.” [Mr. Callaloo, 121-126]. Thus, being intimately involved with his family is a distinct role of leisure in Mr. Callaloo’s life. In addition, he also views leisure as providing travel opportunities, to work out with his wife, time simply to relax, watch TV and not think about work.

Whilst discussing possible changes in his work and leisure, Mr. Callaloo was adamant that many of the changes that have occurred are more to do with his children rather than his career decisions, “I think what might skew your sample is the fact that everything is very much influenced by the family orientation, so it’s not so....., the downshifting itself not so [important] – hasn’t dramatically changed our lives because of the children situation.” [Mr. Callaloo, 415-418]
Mr. Dougla worked nine years for the Microsoft software company in the Pacific Northwest. His downshift was phased, initially taking an IT job with a much smaller company and at the time of interview he was working independently, as a self-employed contractor. Mr. Dougla declined to complete the pre-interview questionnaire but revealed during the interview that he is married and a father to four children, and that he had taken a significant income reduction with his voluntary decision to leave Microsoft.

Although his career change was premised as a downshift, he was at the time of interview, still working as many if not more hours than when he was working for the large software company. But his ultimate goal was to work under less stressful conditions and have more control over his own time. He now lives and works out of his home in Utah.

Mr. Dougla was considered a tentative downshifter for this study because he is still in a state of flux with regards to careers. His choice to leave Microsoft was voluntary, and his control over his own time had increased. But whether this increased discretionary time was being used for something other than work in the sense of obligated work, or even whether the nature of his work had morphed into something that he enjoyed (and considered as leisure) was not apparent. In the Saltzman downshifting typology, Mr. Dougla would be recognized as a self employer. He declined to provide any pre and post income details.

When asked to discuss the role of leisure in his life, Mr. Dougla was rather sheepish in admitting that “I don’t really have a lot of hobbies, in part for a long period
of time I didn’t have any time in my life for hobbies.” [Mr. Dougla, 168-169]. He went on to explain “…a complicating factor is that we’ve got four small kids, so I ergghh, I don’t know if, its like just the things of taking care of kids, I don’t know if you count that as leisure or not, but it sure keeps you busy.” [Mr. Dougla, 172-174]. Defining leisure, he referred to “frivolous behavior and something that doesn’t have a productive purpose” [Mr. Dougla, 185] which helps contextualize the somewhat limited role it apparently portrays in his life, as any father of four will attest.

Mrs. Ent

Mrs. Ent is truly grounded in the domain of education, after receiving her bachelors’ degree she taught in public schools for eleven years, during which time she obtained two masters degrees, in educational leadership and non-profit management. She subsequently moved into education consulting, for a further eight years. Two years ago, she chose to downshift, taking a 75% salary reduction, because she became fixated and obsessed with answering the question of, what matters most to her and why. Her pre-downshift salary was in the $150 – 250k per annum bracket and post-downshift she earns in the $45-$60k per annum bracket. She started to understand that “the more engaged I became with the question the more I realized that some of what I was spending inordinate amounts of time on, were not really in sync with the way in which I was realizing I needed to answer that question.” [Mrs. Ent, 32-36].

Mrs. Ent estimates the amount of time she spends on ‘work’ projects now not too dissimilar from before she downshifted. However, the major difference is her downshift enabled her to selectively choose which projects to work on and thus align her work
efforts more closely with her personal interests. Mrs. Ent recently founded a non-profit venture, which helps organizations from various sectors conduct needs and asset assessments to determine cross-sector alliances. In addition she is also president of a consulting firm that provides expertise in developing business solutions for education and marketing sectors. Mrs. Ent is single but living with a partner in Los Angeles, California and considering a relocation north into Oregon within a year or two. She has no children and is in her early forties.

Although still very active in a work sense, Mrs. Ent is considered a bona fide downshifter because she has turned down numerous lucrative corporate consulting contracts because they were not aligned with her personal values. Within the Saltzman typology she would be classified as a self employer / career plateau. Although she invests considerable effort into ‘work’, she feels fully devoted to more personal meaningful work, indicating that “if we used a Venn diagram analogy for work and leisure, now there is more overlap than not.” [Mrs. Ent, 209-210].

One of Mrs. Ent’s buzzwords that cropped up continuously throughout our interview was ‘organic’. She explains, “…you know, I don’t distinguish between weekends and my week days, my life is very organic now. I know you are going to ask me about leisure time but the reason I don’t distinguish it is I love my work and I don’t view my work as work or something separate from the rest of my life, it’s a very integrated piece of my - my life.” [Mrs. Ent, 100-104]. She continued with this train of thought further along in the interview, “that I do not really recognize leisure per se in my life, you know a better word for me frankly is balance. It’s not so much about separating the work and the leisure, as it is about living in a balanced way, and integrating all the aspects of
your life in a holistic way, so that there isn’t this separation. I think for me it’s more integrated now, and what comes to mind is just being in balance, more than it is about having these separate components.” [Mrs. Ent, 242-251]. Although Mrs. Ent refused to acknowledge the word ‘leisure’ she did admit “…one of the things I have always done, even when things were a bit chaotic in terms of just having any personal time, I have always tried to sneak out and explore part of the city, maybe go to a museum, try out a restaurant or go to a theatre show.” [Mrs. Ent, 224-228]

Ms. Flim

Ms. Flim worked for nearly five years as a consultant in the health industry. She is in her late twenties, single and has no children. Three years ago she made her decision to downshift because she felt that her career was not heading in the direction that she desired. So she went to graduate school for two years, got a masters degree and has been working for the government in the domain of public health administration, for just over a year now. Prior to downshifting she was involved with business modeling in the private health sector, which she indicated was not her first choice straight out of college, but was something that she “…just fell into and stuck with it” [Ms. Flim, 34]. It was the prospect of being able to work more with communities and address the issue of disparities and access to health care that drove Ms. Flim on to make her career change. She feels, even though the income is lower than before, that this career will lead to more personal satisfaction and she will have a more significant influence on society.

Her career change means that she has accepted an approximate 45% reduction in salary with an estimated time commitment reduction of about 30%. Her income prior to
downshifting was in the $60-70k per annum bracket and now it is in the $25-35k per annum bracket. Ms. Flim is a bona fide downshifter, having voluntarily chosen to reduce her income she now feels able to dedicate a significant amount of her free time to volunteering in her community. In Saltzman’s typology she is a career shifter.

Ms. Flim sees leisure as fulfilling the role of providing “relaxation and an area of her life to enjoy herself.” [Ms. Flim, 97-98]. She explains, “For me when I think of leisure, I think of being outdoors, camping, hiking, skiing, whatnot, yoga these sorts of things, but also reading and just a lot of down-time, but I don’t necessarily have a lot of down-time.” [Ms. Flim, 100-104]. Although she doesn’t perceive to have a lot of downtime (or leisure) she recognizes its importance and thus makes an effort to carve out some in her weekly schedule, “… I try to fit it [leisure] into my life, like I mean I think it’s pretty important to have a work life balance, so leisure for me is something very calming and relaxing.” [Ms. Flim, 117-119].

Mr. Gyul

Mr. Gyul is married and has two young children. He is in his early fifties and was a very successful chief financial officer in New York City, with over thirty years worth of experience in the fields of finance, mergers and acquisitions and business development. He now lists his occupation as building his own house in the Hamptons, NY, where he also lives. He still earns an annual salary from corporate stock dividends. Mr. Gyul is well educated, having earned an MBA in finance and investment management from Stanford business school. He made his decision to downshift three years ago and as a consequence his annual income reduced by nearly 60%, with an accompanying 50%
reduction in working hours. Pre-downshift income was in the $150-250k per annum bracket and post-downshift income is in the $75-90k per annum bracket.

Although the company that Mr. Gyul was working for was taken over and his services were not required by the newly merged company, Mr. Gyul is considered a bona fide downshifter because he regularly receives calls and emails directly from companies and from recruiters endeavoring to entice him back into the city with lucrative offers. He has and continues to resist their invitations. Mr. Gyul is a partial self employer (on the Saltzman downshifter typology) and early retiree.

Leisure plays an important role in Mr. Gyul’s life, although prior to our interview it is something that he confesses, “you know I haven’t really considered a lot of these issues.” [Mr. Gyul, 296]. During the course of our interview, it is obvious that leisure is considered an avenue for family development, travel and for playing sport for Mr. Gyul. He reveals that, “of lot of leisure time is actually spent with my children, and leisure also means sports for me, I love real tennis, golf and running. Beyond that I tend to think of leisure in terms of vacations.” [Mr. Gyul, 74-76].

Mr. Hasecara

Mr. Hasecara, like several participants in this study, executed a phased downshift. Following his bachelors degree he worked in the oil industry as a drilling engineer. After trading oil dollars for graduate school Mr. Hasecara then took a position within the government, which was an obvious upshift from graduate school in terms of salary, but it was lower than what he would have been earning as a drilling engineer. Mr. Hasecara
then upshifted from his government position to economic consulting for a small financial company, which he did for three years, and his salary was in the $110 – 150k per annum range. Nearly two years ago, Mr. Hasecara decided to opt for a further career change, he jokingly recalls how he explained to his family that he was taking early retirement by leaving the consulting industry to work in academia. He is now in his second year of a tenure track university professor position in an economics department at a prestigious research institution in Austin, Texas. He earns in the $75-90k per annum income bracket. He sustained an approximate 40% salary reduction for the equivalent number of hours as what he would have been doing consulting. Although, he expects that the time commitment will taper somewhat once he has tenure. Mr. Hasecara is married and in his late thirties.

Mr. Hasecara is a bona fide downshifter, voluntarily trading time intensive, high pressure oil dollars for research and teaching hours in an academic setting. He can be categorized as a career shifter on the Saltzman downshifting typology.

Commenting on the role of leisure in his life, Mr. Hasecara’s strong work ethic and economics training prevailed in his answers, “so this is a question I find hard to answer because I never really got a lot of utility from relaxing. Even when I was younger, there was very little leisure as most people would define it.” [Mr. Hasecara, 226-231]. He goes on, “I just don’t have leisure time, I don’t view it that way. Whenever I have time off I always have a project at the house to work on.” [Mr. Hasecara, 247-248]. Before re-assessing and accepting that he does have leisure, “My leisure then is really, yeah it’s not going out and doing sports, interacting with people, my leisure is just taking care of the
things I need to take care of at the house, I mean I get utility from that. So to me, I guess that’s relaxing, just taking care of my house.” [Mr. Hasecara, 256-260].

Mr. Irie

Mr. Irie is one of six non-national citizens involved in this study as a participant. He worked for twenty eight years as an accountant / sales representative in Montego Bay in Jamaica, and now he is a part time tennis instructor living in Southern Florida. His downshift was a carefully thought through quality of life decision made in concert with his wife and son. It meant him leaving a comfortable lifestyle earning between $30-45k per annum in Jamaica, to earning under $20k per annum as a tennis instructor. Mr. Irie is in his early fifties and attained a high school education in the “mother land”. For this study he is considered a tentative downshifter, primarily because he and his family are living with his mother-in-law in South Florida. Under those conditions his family can function and survive, but in his own words “I mean de day you buy a house, every ting changes, the WHOLE landscape”. On the Saltzman downshifter typology, Mr. Irie is a career shifter.

During our interview, I asked Mr. Irie about the role of leisure in his life, his response indicated a bias towards viewing more of an instrumental role for leisure, “I would say that it helps ageing, I would say that it helps alleviate stress. Those are maybe the two main roles of it NOW.” [Mr. Irie, 24-25]. As well as his career change, Mr. Irie’s leisure has also been strongly affected by his identity role reversal within his own family. His wife completed her studies in Florida and is now a registered nurse, and consequently she is the main bread winner in their household. “like back home I mean I had this role of
being THE provider, full stop. So I had to find ways of doing it and the concentration was doing it. Her income is of such now that we could live on it alone, but to create more – more – more leisure in life then it would mean I need to create more income as against now.” [Mr. Irie, 324-327].

Mr. Jouvert

Mr. Jouvert is married and in his early fifties with no children. He was born and raised in England but transplanted over to the United States some twenty years ago, which puts him in the same category as Mr. Irie in terms of being a non-national citizen.

He worked in San Francisco for a large health company as a corporate trainer, but ten years ago chose to downshift after the company expressed a desire to relocate him to the North-east of the States. He now describes himself as an entrepreneur / writer / marketer. The decision led to an approximate 65% annual salary reduction, with an associated 25% working time reduction. Pre-downshift he earned in the $60-75k per annum range and now his income is in the $20-30k per annum bracket. Mr. Jouvert obtained a bachelors degree in England and has taken some graduate level courses at university. He is a bona fide downshifter on the basis that his choice to not transfer across the country as his employer wanted him to do was voluntary and it resulted in him working less hours for a smaller salary. Mr. Jouvert rented his accommodation before and after his downshift in San Francisco. Saltzman would categorize Mr. Jouvert as a self employer.
During our interview Mr. Jouvert was adamant that comparing his leisure and his lifestyle now and before his downshift would be very difficult, because a more significant factor influencing lifestyle and leisure changes rather than downshifting was that he got married.

When asked to comment on the role of leisure in his life, Mr. Jouvert admitted that Joseph Pieper’s book – ‘leisure the basis of culture’ had quite an effect on him. “…I’ve always been somebody that leisure has been a really important – high – high value. I know that you’re probably looking for people that the light bulb went on and they had an epiphany because they’d been blinkered into external motivations and suddenly they realized .... Oops there’s more to life than that. But I think that I’ve always had that-really.” [Mr. Jouvert, 87-91]. Pressed a little further to explain the role leisure plays in his own life, Mr. Jouvert explained leisure is “an activity that has its own values and is done for pleasure.” [Mr. Jouvert, 104-105].

Ms. Kaiser

Ms. Kaiser is a single female in her early thirties with no children or dependents. She has a masters degree and is currently studying to obtain a doctoral degree. Before changing careers, she was a marketing director for an architectural firm in Boston, and she had worked professionally for six years. Now she is a graduate student at a large research university in the North East, with the intention of becoming a university professor. Her downshift was phased over two years, meaning that she started planning for graduate school financially and academically during her professional career. She is now in her third year of graduate school.
Ms. Kaiser voluntarily chose to take a career path with an immediate lower salary (marketing director to graduate student) and an associated estimated 30% reduction in time commitment. This equated to dropping from the $60-75k per annum income bracket down to less than $20k per annum income. However, she is considered a tentative downshifter because, after obtaining her doctoral degree and working in academia she has the potential to earn more than what she would have if she continued in marketing. Likewise there is a great possibility that in her future role as a university professor she will work longer hours than as a marketing director. Ms. Kaiser rented an apartment before her downshift and still continues to rent. She is a career shifter on the Saltzman typology.

Before downshifting, Ms. Kaiser viewed leisure as a counter balance to the stresses of work and something that occurred mainly at the weekends, “my leisure was really needed to balance the stress I had from my job, so the weekend was all about forgetting about work.” [Ms. Kaiser, 282-283]. Leisure now, is an integral part of her life, “now leisure is just my life. Things I do now [after downshifting] are just to enjoy myself, I’m not trying to forget any misery.” [Ms. Kaiser, 285-288]. She defined leisure as, “like when I don’t have to be anywhere, I don’t have to know what time it is, I don’t have to schedule anything, you know it’s like I’m just kinda loose to do whatever I want to and emmm I can do it as long as I’m enjoying myself.” [Ms. Kaiser, 147-150].

Mr. Limer

Mr. Limer’s career history was rather complicated. He has made several career changes that can be considered legitimate downshifts. He is a native of India, but is a
fully fledged American citizen having lived in the States over a decade. Married and in his late forties, Mr. Limer has one daughter.

The first downshift entailed Mr. Limer leaving his job as an export manager in India, within the private sector after three years experience. Although this job was highly paid and had numerous beneficial perks, he moved to work for the civil service in the Indian government, because of ethical and personal reasons, he remembers saying to himself; “I’m having a lot of fun no doubt, but is this why I went through whatever it is, 17, 20 years of education – and also I saw a lot of environment degradation in India.” [Mr. Limer, 13-14]. This initial career move involved about a 50% salary reduction. In the Indian bureaucracy, Mr. Limer worked his way up into middle management over an eight year period. However, in his mid thirties, he’d reached a stage where in order for him to become more influential in policy making and advance professionally he had to get a doctoral degree. So he chose to pursue a doctoral degree in energy and environmental economics at a large university in the Northeast United States. He considers this decision a significant downshift, losing several perks such as “in the Indian government you get a lot of perks, like we get a bungalow for free, you get servants and whatnot,” [Mr. Limer, 48-49] to live on graduate student wages for six years. After graduating Mr. Limer remained in the States and has been working in academia for the past five years in the South. It is somewhat difficult to compare salaries between professions and countries, but it is fair to say that had he remained within the Indian government he would be financially well off and probably in a more favorable financial position compared to now. This is confirmed with this statement, “this job, although it pays less than what I had before, it has this one big advantage of flexibility and really the
reason I took this job is that I really want to read and write and be in a campus type of environment in my life – I don’t care I’m getting 10% less money or 50% less I don’t care.” [Mr. Limer, 438-441].

Under the Saltzman typology, Mr. Limer ranks as a career shifter. He is a bona fide downshifter, having voluntarily chosen this career change. Although, Mr. Limer’s downshift does not appear to have reduced the amount of time he dedicates to work, in fact it is quite the opposite, “well you know this job – a college professor, its not something that you do, you know, nine to five type of deal just Monday to Friday. There’s always reading or something, or mid term grading, doing something or the other over the weekend. I mean I have very few weekends where I don’t do anything that’s related to work. Whereas when I was in the Indian government, most of the time, my weekend was free.” [Mr. Limer, 110-114]. However, there are two caveats that lead me to believe Mr. Limer is a bona fide downshifter. The first is that his work now is more intrinsically motivated, and thus there is a greater degree of overlap between his work and leisure now as compared to before. The second is related to the nature of academia and his experience of working as a university professor. The following insight clearly demonstrates that he is expecting to reduce his workload and work related stress once he obtains tenure from his university, “… this is however the more stressful thing, I think that’s because I’m untenured – maybe once you’re tenured the stress goes away. Because every year we have to shoot for contract you know – annual contract!” [Mr. Limer, 492-494].

Mr. Limer has a great deal of respect for the role of leisure in his life, although this hasn’t always been the case. As evidenced in this excerpt from his interview, “it’s very, very important because I think that we do not take it into consideration enough. And
one of the reasons I think that I have a couple of ailments like diabetes, I had cancer three years back and I have high cholesterol is that we do not take time off for leisure. And I’m beginning to realize that more and more now and I hope I can change my lifestyle to include more leisure.” [Mr. Limer, 203-207]. He is now thoroughly convinced with the healing properties of leisure, and firmly believes leisure is the best way to combat stress, “…it is the BEST way. It is not one way, it is the BEST way and I think that we must have a policy of telling people that.” [Mr. Limer, 234-235].

Mr. Maracas

Of all the participants in this study, Mr. Maracas has certainly chosen one of the more radical careers to move into, as this response indicates whilst answering an early question in the interview, “I must preface all the rest of these questions by noting that I am posted to this small island state in the Caribbean from 2006-2008, and because of the difficult security situation here (rampant violent crime, and the ever-present threat of a sudden political meltdown and the violent chaos that ensues), my life is abnormal in many respects, because I live under a set of security restrictions that affect my daily existence in important ways.” [Mr. Maracas, 12-16].

Mr. Maracas recently joined the diplomatic corp. operating for the United States government in an island country in the Caribbean. Prior to this, he was an attorney in Washington D.C. for eight years and at the time of leaving was being offered a partnership in the law firm that he worked for. He left the law firm nearly two years ago and after receiving extensive language and cultural training he was recently assigned to his post in the Caribbean, where he will be stationed for a minimum of two years.
Clearly, Mr. Maracas was looking for a different way of life by downshifting, he referred to enjoying the “intellectual stimulation and mental combat” associated with practicing law, but did not like its insularity and found that his “… life was totally different from the way I had envisioned it.” [Mr. Maracas, 5-9]. His new career path is obviously fulfilling this desire for a new direction, “I like the fact that the place I now call “home” is in fact a place in a foreign country that is in most ways totally alien to what I used to consider my normal life. After all, that’s why I’m here. It makes just “existing” a kind of challenge.” [Mr. Maracas, 62-65].

He is in his mid to late thirties, single and has no children. Mr. Maracas is a well educated individual, his highest academic achievement was to receive juris doctor from Harvard law school. He estimates that his downshift entails about a 35% decrease in weekly hours dedicated to work, with a corresponding approximate 60% salary decrease. Where, previously he was earning in the $150-250k per annum bracket and now his income is in the $75-90k per annum range. In terms of accommodation, Mr. Maracas rented in Washington D.C. and now his housing is supplied by the government.

Mr. Maracas is a bona fide downshifter, he has more control over his work and leisure time, his career change was voluntary and he chose to reduce his salary for these changes. In terms of Saltzman’s typology, he would be classified as a career shifter.

The productive dimension of leisure for Mr. Maracas is demonstrated by the following quote, “… to me, leisure is whatever you do when you do not have to account to someone else for the use of your time. I consider myself a person who can use leisure time productively, and not have to rely on outside pressures to discipline my use of my time.” [Mr. Maracas, 53-56]. This perspective that leisure’s main role is for personal
development is emphasized again later in his interview, “my view of leisure is that it is the time when you can work toward your own personal goals, rather than the goals you adopt for exogenous reasons because of the responsibilities you undertake as part of your job.” [Mr. Maracas, 105-107].

Mr. Naranga

Mr. Naranga is in his early thirties, and married. He and his wife were expecting their first child within three months (of the interview date). Mr. Naranga was an electrical engineer based mainly in the states of Colorado and New Mexico for over eight years. Prior to making the career change his disgruntlement with the standard nine-to-five desk-chained job motivated him to downshift and become a tennis instructor and in order to execute this change he felt the need to move across the country. So two years ago Mr. Naranga and his wife relocated to North Carolina. This change entailed him accepting an approximate 65% reduction in salary and a “weird” work schedule, which he estimates is probably about 60 to 65% of the working hours that he used to do as an engineer. Pre-downshift income was estimated to be $60-75k per annum and post-downshift income is estimated to be in the $20-30k per annum range. Mr. Naranga is educated to the Masters degree level.

During our interview he insinuated that he is still adjusting to his freedom and different time structure afforded by the downshift and equated it to “it’s a little like being back in college, without the homework”. He and his wife own their home in North Carolina, whilst they used to rent in Colorado.
Mr. Naranga is a bona fide downshifter, he voluntarily traded income for control of more personal time by completely changing careers. He even noted that he consumes much less since his downshift, “… its funny, because now we live two miles from the mall, and if I’d lived two miles from the mall as an engineer I’d probably have been there all the time, its kinda crazy.” [Mr. Naranga, 427-428]. Mr. Naranga would be classified as a career shifter in Saltzman’s terminology. It was a difficult decision, to the point where he felt compelled for a total change of scenery (and State) in order to make the change and sustain it, “I didn’t think I was going to be able to downshift knowing that my current job was still going to be there, you know what I mean, like I didn’t, like it took a cross-country move for me to downshift because I didn’t know that if I could ever convince myself, especially being just newly married, that I could just leave my job and go do something else like the next day.” [Mr. Naranga, 508-512].

The function of leisure in Mr. Naranga’s life has changed since his downshift. Before as an engineer, leisure served him primarily as a social relaxation outlet to catch up with friends and a time to play sports, now it is more idiosyncratic, “now my leisure time has become more individual, when I was working as an engineer, my leisure time would be to catch up with my friends, and you know, hang out with my fiancé or girlfriend.” [Mr. Naranga, 99-101]. Leisure now serves a different role, as indicated by “… I think now I look for things that are somewhat challenging because I think my job at times is not challenging.” [Mr. Naranga, 187-188], as compared to “which is funny, because when I was an engineer I always looked for the opposite, I always looked for something that was mindless.” [Mr. Naranga, 195].
Mr. Oman

Mr. Oman is in his mid thirties, single, in a long term relationship, and he has no children. His downshift involved him leaving a public school teaching role to become a graduate student and with the intent on moving towards an academic tenure track position in a university setting. For six years Mr. Oman was a teacher in New York, he made a phased career change five years ago. He estimates that he halved his income, and reduced his work time commitment by about a quarter of the original hours. In NY his pre-downshift salary was in the $30-45k per annum range and currently he earns less than $20k per annum. Mr. Oman rented his accommodation before the downshift and continues to do so after, although the change involved a move from New York on the East coast to Berkley California on the West coast.

Mr. Oman is considered a tentative downshifter essentially because he voluntarily chose to change careers and trade income for more time, but his long term goal, of becoming a university professor will probably offer a greater or equal salary to what he would have been earning as a public school teacher, although there is little doubt that the hours in a university setting will be more flexible than those he worked in an elementary school setting.

Defining leisure, Mr. Oman stated, “….its the ability to-to-to choose, you know, what to do with your time, or rather it’s the opportunity to do something that’s fun and enjoyable, and its kinda like – not filled with pressure.” [Mr. Oman, 41-44]. His notion of how important leisure is in his life is expressed in the following statement, “I’m very careful and very adamant about making sure I have time to do, you know, the things that I like doing – you know, for fun.” [Mr. Oman, 49-51]. As well as fun, leisure is also a
domain, considered for exercise and relaxation, “in a nutshell, like week in, week out, I just have to make sure that I have whatever amount of time possible to emmm you know, do something outside of studies, emmm whether it is exercising, hiking, just walking around, reading, watching a movie or just something I find enjoyable.” [Mr. Oman, 57-61].

Ms. Pelau

Ms. Pelau is bona fide downshifter in the truest sense of the word. For eight years she provided the in-house legal counsel for a small software company during the height of the Information Technology boom in the 1990s. In her late thirties, she decided to downshift five years ago, spending four years as an independent book publisher, practicing law on a sole practitioner basis (ad-hoc) and currently she is developing her skills as a documentary producer. Ms. Pelau is educated to doctoral level. She rented a tiny apartment in San Francisco before downshifting and now owns her own home in the same vicinity. Her income has reduced to approximately half of what it was pre-downshift and her time commitment varies greatly with whatever project she is involved in, but never more than 50% of what she was doing whilst practicing law for the software firm. Pre-downshift income was in the $110-150k per annum bracket and post-downshift she estimates to be in the $60-75k per annum range. She is single and has no children.

Ms. Pelau is a bona fide downshifter, she traded a successful demanding legal career to setup her own business ventures and to continue practicing law on a more limited ad hoc basis. This affords her a much greater degree of flexibility and control.
over her work and leisure time. Saltzman would classify Ms. Pelau as a career shifter / self-employer.

Ms. Pelau was probably one of the better informed participants that I interviewed, especially considering leisure and its role in her life. After downshifting, she traveled for a year and then started her own publishing company with a childhood friend of hers. She revealed that they wrote several books with leisure as a permeating theme, especially because there was an abundance of people in Silicon Valley who were not working and had loads of free time at their disposal because of the downturn the IT industry had taken during the late 1990s. This meant that Ms. Pelau had done extensive research on the topic of leisure! She defined leisure as, “what you do when you don’t have any obligation to do it, so it’s being able to do whatever you feel like doing when you feel like doing it. I don’t define it as any specific activity. I define it as more as something that you do purely because you want to.” [Ms. Pelau, 20-24]. When commenting on the role that it plays in her life, her answer was obviously well articulated, “I’ve always strived to do something for work and money that feels like leisure, so that’s kind of been my goal and when I was working as an in-house lawyer for the small software company it really was going against my grain.” [Ms. Pelau, 25-28]. Ms. Pelau now finds herself in the fortunate position, having ensured financial security and home ownership, to be able to experiment with leisure pursuits and let them drive her work ambitions. So beyond relaxation and fun, leisure takes a central role in her life. “I traveled which was great and now I’m able to do something for work, well I do a little bit of law as a freelancer to make money, but when I get to do for work which is, you know, sort of a hobby right now, but I hope to
“turn it into something that makes money, is the video documentaries that I’m working on and prior to that it was publishing and writing this small book.” [Ms. Pelau, 32-36].

Mr. Quidat

Mr. Quidat traded diving off the exotic shores of Madagascar for the classrooms of a large university in the Northeast of the United States. He was a maritime archaeologist for twelve years, based out of Memphis, Tennessee, but working all over the States and the world. He is now studying for a doctoral degree in history, with the premise of becoming a history professor in a small liberal arts college somewhere along the Northeast coast of the United States. Mr. Quidat is in the transition phase of his downshift (i.e. he is still a graduate student), and estimates at this stage his career change has entailed at least a 50% salary reduction and on average an 80% reduction in time allocated to work. His pre-downshift income was in the $30-45k per annum range and post-downshift Mr. Quidat earns under $20k per annum. Mr. Quidat is in his mid to late thirties, single but has been with his partner for several years and they have no children. He rents his accommodation, as he did before he downshifted.

Similar to Mr. Oman and Ms. Kaiser, Mr. Quidat is considered a tentative downshifter because he is intending to apply for a tenure track position at a university in the States, once he obtains his doctoral degree, however he is not yet a professor. Whether this career move will pay more or less than his previous career is uncertain and undoubtably the time commitment involved in the arduous academic tenure track process brings into question whether he will have more control over his time than if he carried on
as a maritime archaeologist. In terms of Saltzman’s typology, Mr. Quidat is classified as a career shifter.

Leisure is considered an important aspect of Mr. Quidat’s life. He considers it primarily synonymous with relaxation, “leisure is important, yeah I enjoy relaxing.” [Mr. Quidat, 109-110]. Delving further into the role leisure takes in his life, Mr. Quidat elucidates, “…yeah, it’s about relaxing, well travel is a part of leisure and it’s maybe a bit of exploring. Its about not being erghhhh told or required that I have to be somewhere, its more of control over your own time.” [Mr. Quidat, 112-114].

It also appears that Mr. Quidat is motivated by leisurely intentions with his career move, “my buddy and I have joked about this, its part of the reason I want to get into this whole teaching business is you become a PERFECT member of the whole leisure class – you know, you work three quarters of the year and you get one quarter of the year off – you work maybe twenty hours a week, maximum!” [Mr. Quidat, 106-109]. Having interviewed several participants who actually are university professors (pre and post tenure decision), then Mr. Quidat’s attitude could be considered somewhat rather naïve.

Mrs. Razzam

Having recently married and moved out of Manhattan, NY, into a well-to-do suburb about an hour away from New York City, Mrs. Razzam attributes many of the changes in her leisure and life to her new personal circumstances. She is in her early thirties, with no children and educated to the masters degree level. She downshifted from an international commodity broker position in the city, to working in management with a
non-profit organization. The career change entailed a salary adjustment in the region of a 45 to 50% reduction, with an estimated 25% time commitment reduction. Her pre-downshift annual income was in the $110-150k per annum range, post-downshift she earns in the $60-75k per annum range.

Mrs. Razzam is a bona fide downshifter: she was a successful commodity broker with over seven years of experience and her career change, which was made just over a year ago, compensates less and is less time demanding. This change was voluntarily made. The transition between careers was heavily assisted by her marriage to her partner, “maybe there are people that downshift just out of the blue, which I was looking for but I just couldn’t, you know, justify it right out.” [Mrs. Razzam, 166-167] She goes on to say, “…had I not met my husband and had a successful relationship and decided to get married, I probably would have made the choice [to downshift] myself in a year or two.” [Mrs. Razzam, 167-169]

Before downshifting, she rented an apartment in Manhattan, and now she is part owner of a house in a self admitted “privileged burb” of New York [Mrs. Razzam, 182]. Under the Saltzman typology, Mrs. Razzam would be classified as a career shifter.

The role of leisure in her life materializes within her definition of leisure, “I would say it’s, you know, the pursuit of alternate interests and relaxation and pleasure.” [Mrs. Razzam, 40-41]. Beyond relaxation and pleasure, Mrs. Razzam recognizes the importance of leisure in other realms of her life, but seems a tad confused as to what it really means for her. “…it seems to be where I kind of find my … emmm… where I do my thinking. It definitely is a priority for me. I mean leisure doesn’t tend to be like something that’s that ergghhh, what should I say - like its – leisure is more activity for me
than it is non-activity – I guess. So to me leisure is just – free time to do other things your interested in.” [Mrs. Razzam, 31-36]

Mr. Soucouyant

Mr. Soucouyant has over sixteen years worth of experience in the financial services industry as a salesman. Two years ago, haunted by his friends and colleagues experiences of overwork, he made the decision to turn down a promotion and several since then. He explains, “…hearing horror stories of friends of mine that either got divorced or you know, they’re estranged from their family and these are my peers, I mean literally my counterparts in age and I didn’t want to do that. I love my wife and I love my kids, but I chose not to go down that road.” [Mr. Soucouyant, 30-34]. He has continued to work for the same company but instead of commuting into work every day on the arduous LA highway he decided to turn down the promotion and work from home. Mr. Soucouyant is in his early forties, married and is a father to two children. He achieved a master’s degree level education. Ownership of his Orange County house in the suburbs of Los Angeles was not affected by his downshift.

Mr. Soucouyant’s salary is within the $110 – 150k per annum range and this has not been affected by his downshift. However, where his downshift does come into play is in his weekly estimation of working hours. Since passing up the promotion and electing to work at home Mr. Soucouyant estimates that for the same work output he has reduced his work time commitment by about a third and this excludes commute time.
Mr. Soucouyant is a bona fide downshifter in the vein of a career plateauer. Although he readily admits to being tempted by the numerous offers from recruiters (in fact on the day of interview he had just received an enticing offer from a recruiter, which included a substantial pay raise and significant travel), he is constantly reminded by his wife that “… you know, you have it so good, you’ve got it so good, working from home!” [Mr. Soucouyant, 8]. In discussing his career plateau decision he concludes “I just hope that I’m not stupid in passing this big money offer up, because at this point I’m going for quality of life and I think in the long run it will pay off” [Mr. Soucouyant, 9-11]. Mr. Soucouyant’s downshift has significantly increased his control over his time and reduced his working time commitment.

Mr. Soucouyant believes “leisure plays a very important role in my life.” [Mr. Soucouyant, 146]. Work is predominantly the top priority for this businessman, and leisure is equated with a role of relaxation. “… I find a lot of identity with work and if I’m not working, there’s ehhh – it’s harder for me to NOT equate my worth or my identity with my work and I get antsy if I’m not working to a certain extent. But on the other hand I REALLY appreciate relaxation.” [Mr. Soucouyant, 148-151]. We can see further into the role of leisure in his life with his definition of leisure, “I would say leisure, is a little bit of autonomy, the ability to do things that my brain or my body needs to have done. The way that I WANT to do it. Emmm I think leisure is not necessarily an incentive trip paid for by the company, that is definitely not leisurely, because you’ve got to keep a smile going – you have to keep up façade. Leisure is doing things and thinking about things and emm being with the people that you want to be with. So I think it’s really the
power, the empowerment to do and think and spend the time however you want to spend it.” [Mr. Soucouyant, 156-165].

Mr. and Mrs. Tabanca

Mr. and Mrs. Tabanca were the only couple, who were both interviewed for this study. Each was interviewed independently of the other. Both of them are in their early forties, he is educated to a master’s degree level and she is educated to doctoral degree level. Their story was quite remarkable, considering that Mrs. Tabanca had downshifted from a marriage threatening, time hungry attorney position in Los Angeles to become an academic in Florida. After four years in central Florida, Mrs. Tabanca chose to upshift in terms of salary and benefits but still with the same university to a specially funded position in Aruba. Her position in Florida was replaced in anticipation of her starting in Aruba, unfortunately however, with very little notice she received news that the Aruban government did not want to fund the education program she had signed the contract for and thus found herself with no job and a mortgage to pay. So Mrs. Tabanca frantically sought a new position and is now working in a university in Germany, whilst Mr. Tabanca is still living and working in Florida.

Mrs. Tabanca was an attorney for six years and was earning in the $150-250k per annum bracket, putting in an estimated 60 hours of work a week. During her tenure at the university in central Florida, she took about a 60% salary reduction, earning in the $75-90k per annum range, for an approximate two thirds of the work time commitment. However, in her current position in Germany her teaching load has doubled from the
Florida load and she admits that it is quite demanding work-wise which is compounded by her temporary situational separation from her husband.

Mr. Tabanca has also gone through several downshifts. He started work as a deep-sea diver for maritime wrecks, then moved to Los Angeles to become a personal trainer, where he met Mrs. Tabanca. During their somewhat rocky period in Los Angeles they decided to come to the Northeast primarily so that Mr. Tabanca could get his masters degree in education and give Mrs. Tabanca an option to leave the rigors of the law profession. Although struggling with the temptation to practice law in Washington DC, whilst Mr. Tabanca studied for his Masters, Mrs. Tabanca resisted the big dollars and settled herself by reading for a doctoral degree at the same university as Mr. Tabanca. After working as a high school teacher for five years, Mr. Tabanca further downshifted two years ago to become a tennis instructor and part-time assistant in an ice cream shop. He estimates a 40% decrease in working hours.

Obviously Mr. and Mrs. Tabanca are one of the more complicated cases in this study. Both of them have downshifted in several guises, and for the purposes of this study I would consider both of them bona fide downshifters, although Mrs. Tabanca has recently temporarily upshifted. Both Mr. Tabanca and Mrs. Tabanca’s would be considered career-shifters in Saltzman’s typology. Mr. Tabanca did not provide income data.

The role of leisure in Mr. Tabanca’s life is extremely important. “...it makes life more bearable and very enjoyable.” [Mr. Tabanca, 322-323]. As well as acting to recuperate him for work, he views leisure as a tool “to better himself, and something that will make me live a longer and healthier life.” [Mr. Tabanca, 339-341].
Mrs. Tabanca’s view of the role of leisure in her life is somewhat contradictory. Early in our interview she says “it’s not a huge priority in my life.” [Mrs. Tabanca, 264], but later when responding to my question of whether leisure has become more meaningful for her since the downshift she says “number one, its more of a priority for me – ergghh one of the reasons I left law was precisely because I didn’t get to spend time with my husband.” [Mrs. Tabanca, 486-488] and she concludes “….so absolutely it’s become a priority” [Mrs. Tabanca, 491].

Mrs. Tabanca concluded her interview with an important insight into the transformation of her and her husband’s lives following her career transition, “…it’s weird because we took a major cut in pay to do this ergmmm but ironically our lifestyle has gotten better. And one of the places that we enjoyed life the most, believe it or not, was at the university for Mr. Tabanca’s masters and my PhD. Where we had the least amount of money, and emm you know, we, we spent a lot of time just doing things together, just simple things, like walking to the ice cream store, or just doing something really simple. And emmm that’s stuff we never had time to when I was a lawyer.” [Mrs. Tabanca, 503-508].

Mrs. Unitas

Mrs. Unitas is in her early forties, married, and takes care of two step children and one child of her own. Her family lives in the state of Washington. Mrs. Unitas was earning in excess of $250k per annum as a marketing director with over fifteen years of experience in the advertising agency business. Her formative career was spent at Nike during the 1980s in Oregon. She moved further north to Washington to start her own
successful advertising agency before returning to the corporate world and assuming the role of brand manager for Nordstrom. After three years back in the corporate world, Mrs. Unitas felt the bureaucracy and pressure on her personal life were valid reasons to consider a downshift. So five years ago she downshifted and now she multi-tasks between directing her own company, representing commercial artists and writing. She estimates that her work time commitment now is about two thirds of what it used to be, and as well as being much more relaxed and not hassled by the accompanying bureaucracy of the corporate world, she glee, “… now I don’t even think about work until I arrive on Monday morning.” [Mrs. Unitas, 65-66].

Mrs. Unitas’s downshift was not completely voluntary as political wrangling inside Nordstrom meant that her “budget just kept getting cut back and I kinda saw the writing on the wall that they were going to have to lay me off.” [Mrs. Unitas, 35-37]. However, her decision to turn down tantalizing job offers and not to re-join the corporate train, with its associated time demands is a voluntary joint one between her and her husband. Her pre-downshift income was in excess of $250k per annum, now she earns in the $20 -30k per annum bracket. Mrs. Unitas is educated to bachelors’ degree level and owns her housing as she did before she downshifted.

She is considered a bona fide downshifter, she would be classified somewhere between a career plateauer and career backtracker in terms of Saltzman’s classifications (Saltzman, 1991).

Commenting on the role of leisure in her life, Mrs. Unitas explained “my entire life now is driven by leisure now, in that we are always thinking about our weekends, we
are always thinking about our time off, we’re always thinking about our vacation” [Mrs. Unitas, 127-129].

The leisure/life changes that accompanied Mrs. Unitas’s downshift cannot solely be attributed to her career downshift, she believes that many of the changes were influenced by her having a baby.

Mrs. Vaps

Mrs. Vaps is a prime example of a downshifter. In her early thirties, and just recently married, Mrs. Vaps believes the healthiest thing she ever did was to downshift from an intensely stressed out corporate real estate attorney to a lifestyle-magazine writer. Having obtained her masters degree, she practiced law in Chicago, and then moved to San Francisco under the impression that the west coast mentality would be a little bit more relaxed. Much to her dismay, she realized, “…it doesn’t matter where you are, the practice of law is still the practice of law.” [Mrs. Vaps, 45-46]. And that for her meant a highly stressful, work domineering, time hungry occupation. At the age of 28 and after three years as an attorney, Mrs. Vaps made one of the hardest decisions in her life, she quit her job without a secure job to move into. “…it got to the point where it really was the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my entire life was to quit my job, it was really emotionally and psychologically, besides the fact that it was financially draining, it was the most psychologically draining thing I think I’ve ever done.” [Mrs. Vaps, 60-63]. She moved out of her bourgeoisie apartment and into her friend’s dining room, and after a string of retail and odd jobs she landed an internship at a magazine and pretty quickly developed into a staff writer. She has four years experience as a journalist and is now the
feature writer for a national lifestyle magazine, where she gets to travel and write about leisurely activities on the coast.

Mrs. Vaps’ downshift resulted in an approximate 60% salary reduction, and about a 45-50% reduction in working hours. Her pre-downshift income was in the $110-150k per annum range, post-downshift she earns in the $45-60k per annum range. She still describes herself as a workaholic, but it is something that she thoroughly enjoys and has to force herself to take a break by going for a hike or a walk, practicing yoga or maybe even going down to the bar to watch her college team play football. Having a genuine natural ability at writing, she feels much happier in the journalistic domain and would never return to the dog eat dog world of the legal profession. Mrs. Vaps rented an apartment whilst she was an attorney, she now owns a home with her new husband in the San Francisco bay area.

Mrs. Vaps is a bona fide downshifter, she voluntarily traded a significant portion of her income to gain more control over her work and leisure time. Under Saltzman’s typology she would be classified as a career shifter. She admits that she still works hard, but there is a fundamental difference “… I mean I work hard - I don’t want to say I work just as hard as when I was a lawyer, I mean I work extremely hard – but its very different because when you love what you do, it somehow doesn’t feel as painful.” [Mrs. Vaps, 83-85].

Leisure assumes a strange role for Mrs. Vaps in her downshifted life, because her new career as a lifestyle writer demands that she travels to leisure locals and writes about them. On the face of it, this may seem like the world’s perfect job, but Mrs. Vaps
explained that the nature of her work plays an ironic twist in the way she constructs her notion of leisure “…for me, because I work in that industry [leisure] – that is my work, emm I work for a magazine, I write about homes, travel, food and lifestyle – so that’s what I do in work and I think about it constantly. For me leisure is NOT any of that.” [Mrs. Vaps, 291-294]. She rather furtively admits “…since I’m a travel writer, I can’t stop thinking. So for me leisure is NOT traveling, its NOT vacationing, it doesn’t fit into that normal role that I assume it fits into for most ordinary people, I mean quite honestly I like sitting in front of the television watching football.” [Mrs. Vaps, 297-301]. What was garnered from her interview was, in general, leisure fulfils a role of pure relaxation. It’s a place or state of mind where she can turn off her creative juices and just relax.

Ms. Whewhe

Ms. Whewhe is another attorney downshifter, however, her career change did not involve her leaving the legal profession entirely. She is still an attorney, but rather than working for a private law firm she chose to work for the government in the public sector and she also completely changed her area of practice. Single and in her mid to late thirties, Ms. Whewhe made this change after four years of working for a private law firm. After coming to the realization “…I was just exhausted all the time and I just didn’t want to see….that just wasn’t where I wanted to see my career going and living that lifestyle.” [Ms. Whewhe, 8-11]. She has now been employed by the government for the last four and half years and is very comfortable with her new role. Educated to doctoral level and with no children, Ms. Whewhe is much happier working for the government. Her estimated reduction in salary is about 20% with an associated 35% decrease in work time
commitment. Working for a private law firm, she earned in the $60-75k per annum bracket, now in the public sector she earns in the $45-60k per annum bracket. Ms. Whewhe rented before she downshifted; now she is a home-owner. She lives and works in Pennsylvania, as she did before her downshift.

Ms. Whewhe is a bona fide downshifter. Her career change was voluntary, it entailed a salary reduction and she definitely has more control over her time. It falls somewhere between the back-tracker – career plateauer typology within the Saltzman typology.

The themes of free time and enjoyment prevail in the meaning of leisure for Ms. Whewhe, “...I think it just free – free time, where your relaxing and enjoying what your doing, whether it be something that involves physical activity or just reading a book, emm like a hobby. Just something that you really enjoy and you’re doing it because you really want to do it.” [Mrs. Whewhe, 42-44]. There is a strong notion of ‘balance’ when she considers the role of leisure in her life. Since her downshift Ms. Whewhe explains “...I have a very nice balance now with work and leisure – and I’ve had a lot more opportunities to get involved in activities that I enjoy that aren’t related to work, ehhmmm so I would say that it’s probably 60-40 in my life now.....as in 60 leisure 40 work.” [Ms. Whewhe, 48-50].

Mr. Xante

Mr. Xante is between his mid to late forties. He is married and has two children. After working for over twenty years for General Electric as a manufacturing engineer,
Mr. Xante downshifted to become a math teacher. Motivated by the desire to contribute more to society, get more meaning out of his work and to leave a “dog eat dog” working environment [Mr. Xante, 20], Mr. Xante made this change three years ago.

He gained nominal extra free time on a weekly basis, estimating his weekly total to be fifty hours before and after the downshift. However, for the 45-50% salary reduction he has gained more vacation time, a more consistent work schedule and less work induced stress. Pre-downshift his income was in the $60-75k per annum bracket, post-downshift his annual income is in the $30-45k range. He is educated to masters’ degree level and was a home owner before his downshift and remains a home owner in upstate New York.

Mr. Xante is a bona fide downshifter given his voluntary choice of changing careers and sustaining a salary reduction. Although he estimates that he does not work any less weekly hours as a school teacher than compared to his position as a manufacturing engineer, he does feel more in control of his time and enjoys the perks of longer vacations and a more predictable work routine afforded by the teaching role. In terms of Saltzman’s typology, Mr. Xante would be classified as a career-shifter.

Commenting on the role of leisure in his life now, Mr. Xante specified that leisure now is not much different than before he downshifted. His notion of leisure clearly pervades through from this following statement “I pride myself on being a family man, so if my kids have games I try very hard to make it to them. Whatever activities they have, be it band concert, spring event, scouting event, whatever they have, I try to make it a point of trying to make there... I always have.” [Mr. Xante, 116-120]. In addition to having a high level of involvement with his children, Mr. Xante also believes that the role of
leisure is to do anything that he does not consider an obligation, “… our obligations are to things that you really have to do, you have to go to work, you have to do a couple of things in your own time, like mow the lawn. Now I don’t consider that leisure, but I certainly have free time to watch TV or go running.” [Mr. Xante, 129-132].

Ms. Yuhtink

Ms. Yuhtink obtained her masters degree and taught in high school in Pennsylvania. Initially she taught in a public school in the suburbs of Philadelphia, but then she moved to a more central location in Pennsylvania to teach in a charter school. After a total of ten years teaching, she reached her tolerance limit, downshifting to become a full time yoga teacher, which she has been doing for four and a half years. Teaching in the charter school became too overbearing, and she barely had a minute of the day to think for herself, “…for me it was just really really intense work and just ALL the time ON!” [Ms. Yuhtink, 26-27]. Ms. Yuhtink is single but in a stable relationship. She has no children and is in her mid to late thirties. She continues to rent her housing, as she did before she downshifted.

Whilst teaching Ms. Yuhtink’s salary was in the $30 - 45k per annum range, as a yoga instructor she estimates to be earning under $20k per year and at least 50% less annual income than she earned as a teacher. The work time commitment required of her yoga practice is close to a 40% reduction compared to teacher time commitments. However, she feels perfectly balanced between work and leisure now and she lives for the moment and has alleviated all of the work related stress that she endured before downshifting.
Ms. Yuhtink is a bona fide downshifter. She differs from most of the other single participants in this study in that her pre-downshifting income was below $50k per annum and she lives on less than $20k per annum now. Her decision to downshift was purely voluntary and as demonstrated with this following statement, it was a brave financial decision. “so I just felt it was like I had earned this break and I was just going to sit still for a year, spend half of my savings and not worry about how I was making my income – just spend the money and sit still and then I would come up with something – what was next I didn’t know.” [Ms. Yuhtink, 38-42]

The phased transition element, commonly seen with several of the other participants in this study was not present with Ms. Yuhtink. She chose to change her career and then think about her next move. However, her move into instructing yoga was not completely novel, she had almost six years worth of experience of yoga instruction by the time she left teaching. And she had established enough of a clientele base to keep her financially solvent. Ms. Yuhtink fits into the career-shifter category of Saltzman’s downshifting typology.

As apparent from the following statement, her career change has allowed Ms. Yuhtink to experience leisure in one of its purest forms, “...so I think leisure is having both the time and the space within your physical world, so in the.... By the clock time, but also within your internal space, and in your internal time to enjoy doing whatever you’re doing. And to be present for it.” [Ms. Yuhtink, 326-329]. When asked to describe the role of leisure in her life, Ms. Yuhtink found it very difficult to differentiate leisure from her normal lifestyle, commenting “I feel like everything that I’m doing comes out of that space of just being so joyful and giving me so much energy and being so much fun and
being so satisfying – so it’s really hard to distinguish out like draw a line between this is work and that is leisure.” [Ms. Yuhtink, 264-268]

Ms. Zico

Ms. Zico is in her mid to late thirties. She divorced after her downshift but is in a stable relationship now and she has no children. She earned a bachelors degree in marketing and worked for over fifteen years in marketing, communications, media relations and business management. Her formative professional career was spent in Washington working for the public sector. Ms. Zico then moved to Microsoft, whom she spent six years working for. Her role entailed developing product marketing and corporate image media campaigns, ultimately moving up the career ladder serving as a corporate spokesperson. The higher up the corporate hierarchy she rose the less she enjoyed the working environment at Microsoft, losing touch with what stimulated her, and being guided to “stop collaborating with other colleagues – you should be owning projects.” [Ms. Zico, 20-21]. Just over four years ago Ms. Zico finally transitioned out of her senior manager position and started her own business, becoming president of her own marketing / communications company. This was a very careful phased transition to ensure that she did not burn any bridges with the almighty software company. Ms. Zico is self-employed now, offering one-on-one career coaching and contracting out to several universities in the Seattle area to teach classes in her field of specialty. Within the last year, she has branched out into journalism and production, and writes regularly for regional business journals.
Her downshift entailed an approximate salary reduction of 80% and a work time commitment reduction of about 50%. Pre-downshift, Ms. Zico earned in the $90-110k per annum bracket, post downshift her annual earnings are estimate to be less than $20k. She owned her accommodation in Seattle prior to downshifting and continues to do so, although she rents out a room now to help pay the bills.

Ms. Zico is a bona fide downshifter, she voluntarily bore a significant salary reduction and in the process increased her capacity to control her time. Under Saltzman’s typology she would be classified as a self-employer.

The concepts of enjoyment, relaxation, creativity and freedom to do what she wants to do, permeated through Ms. Zico’s vision of leisure, “… I guess to me, its being relaxed and enjoying myself, laughing ehhmmm being able to think in creative ways, being able to think not just about my work but about personal issues or bigger social issues. Just having time that I get to control and sort of do, what I want to do in that time.” [Ms. Zico, 129-132].

When asked to discuss the role of leisure in her life, apart from admitting that, “she was not known for being a person of leisure.” [Ms. Zico, 102], the notion of balance prevailed in the way she considered the role of leisure in her life, noting, “I’ve always seen work and leisure sort of go hand in hand.” [Ms. Zico, 108-109]. She explained prior to Microsoft, “…my employment was pretty balanced and fun and I did have play time.” [Ms. Zico, 113-114]. However, this balance did not last, “when I went to Microsoft, I really quickly got sucked up into the corporate culture and it wasn’t long before I was doing the stereo-typical Microsoft long hours. It really became out of balance.” [Ms.
Zico, 114-122]. And finally after her downshift, “...so it hasn’t been until I quit Microsoft that I got things back in balance.” [Ms. Zico, 124-125].

DATA CLASSIFICATION

This phase of the analysis is analogous to data reduction. Interview questions that provided the main source for understanding what leisure meant to the downshifters and their experience of leisure were: (1) Tell me about the role of leisure in your life? (2) How do you define leisure? (3) What leisure activities do you enjoy doing when you are at home? (4) What leisure activities do you enjoy doing away from the home? and (5) What was a typical vacation like before you downshifted? What follows are the labels that emerged from the open coding process, along with contextualization text from the interview transcriptions and representative quotes to emphasize the labels. For clarification, if my questions are included in the following sections of text I have put the denotation “RH” in front of them to help differentiate my words from the participants words. In some quotes I have added italics to emphasize the relevant point in the text.

Meanings of Leisure for Downshifters

One of the primary questions driving this research was to identify meanings of leisure for downshifters. The meanings that transpired from the interviews were perceived freedom (free time, self choice, no obligation to do something, do what I want to do); fun and enjoyment; relaxation; creativity; activity (playing sports, doing projects);
balance; absence of work; traveling; doing nothing (watching TV, hanging out); and family.

**Perceived freedom**

In defining leisure or describing the role of leisure in their lives, the participants often referred to concepts related to some form of perceived freedom. Where this freedom consisted of one or several elements: self choice; being able to do what they want to do; free time; and free from obligation.

**Perceived freedom: Self choice**

Having the ability to choose was fundamental for several downshifters (n=5) in their meanings of leisure. Mr. Quidat, said if he did something under his own volition then he would regard that as leisure, for instance if he chose to walk his dog then he would construe that as leisure. However, if his partner asked him and even nagged him to do it, then walking the dog very quickly lost its ‘leisuresque’ like qualities. For example:

RH: so leisure is really about relaxing for you?

Mr. Quidat: yeah its about eghhh relaxing - well travel is a part of leisure and its maybe a bit of exploring - its about not being eghhh told or required that I have to be somewhere - its more of control over your own time - I think that would work

RH: how would you define leisure?

Mr. Quidat: I would define leisure egh - you would probably have to have some of that control of time element in it - and doing something that I chose or want to do - which could range from sitting on the couch watching a college football game all the way to eghhh - going
hiking sweating my nuts off in the Rothrock state forest. - so arggh I mean you get a
couch potato and an active guy in the woods

Mr. Quidat: yes -- the moment strikes you to do it - you know if you’re required to do it - if someone
says - we're going to go walk the dog - I might be like - no I wanna watch football -

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RH: okay – so the word leisure has a strong connotation of activity for you then?
Mrs. Tabanca: activity, but also …..exactly activity – but it has a strong connotation to me of CHOICE –
I CHOOSE what I want to do in that leisure time, as opposed to someone imposing upon
me – like – work – like grading papers, or like bringing home work from the law firm etc
— that to me was someone infringing on my leisure time by … emm by imposing this
amount of work etc whereas if I chose to do – u know – paint the room that’s MY
CHOICE – even though I’m accomplishing something – emm but – but its my choice -so
it has a strong connotation for me of - of – of accomplishment, of having to accomplish
something, but also emm and doing some sort of activity, but also of – its my choice
to do it.

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Perceived Freedom: Do what I want to do

The concept of the ‘self’ emerged again with this label, however rather than
emphasizing choice, the participants’ words reflected more on ‘doing’ and doing because
of a personal desire (n=6). For example:
Mr. Soucouyant: I would say leisure - again is a little bit of autonomy, the ability to do things that my brain or my body needs to have done on my - the way that I need... - the way that I WANT to do it emm. I think leisure is not necessarily an incentive trip paid for by the

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RH: how do you define leisure?

Mrs. Whewhe: ohhh I think it's just free - free time where you're relaxing and enjoying what you're doing - whether it be something that involves physical activity or just reading a book - emm like a hobby - I guess your hobbies or just something that you really enjoy and you're doing it because you really want to do it.

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RH: right - how do you define leisure?

Mrs. Zico: emm I guess - that's a very good question - I guess to me emmm it's being relaxed and enjoying myself - laughing emmm being able to think in creative ways being able to think not just about my work but about personal issues or bigger social issues - just having time that I get to control and sort of do what I want to do in that time.

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RH: good. Can you tell me about the role of leisure in your life, so first of all how do you define leisure?

Ms. Pelau: okay - em having written a couple of books on the topic now I would define it as - what you do when you don't have any obligation to do it - so its being able to do whatever you feel like doing when you feel like doing it - so for some people that might be training for a marathon, some people actually finds kinds of enjoyment through work - so I don't
define it as any specific activity - em I define it more as something that you do purely because you want to…

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Perceived Freedom: Free time

The notion of time and in particular ‘free’ time occurred repeatedly throughout many of the participants (n=12) reflections on leisure. For example:

RH: okay and how would you define leisure?

Mr. Xante: okay that’s kinda .... [he smirks] erghhh its its ... you know we all have our obligations - our obligations are to things that you really have to do - you have to go to work – you have to ...... emmm you know do a couple of things in your own time - so to speak erggh - you have to mow the lawn and I don’t consider those leisure activities -but I certainly have some free time to watch TV and I try to run 3 or 4 times a week

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Mrs. Razzam: emmm yeaahh – I mean its – its- its seems to be emmm it seems to be where I kind of erggghh- what should I say – like its – leisure is more activity for me than it is non-activity – I guess . i.e. sports and traveling and emmm u know taking different courses and things like that – so to me leisure is just – free time to do other things you’re interested in.

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Mrs. Unitas: my entire life is driven by leisure - [laughing] in that we are always thinking about our weekends - we are always thinking about our time off - we're always thinking about our vacation

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RH: how do you define leisure?

Ms. Whewhe: ohhh I think its just free - free time where your relaxing and enjoying what your doing- whether it be something that involves physical activity or just reading a book - emm like a hobby - I guess your hobbies or just something that you really enjoy and your doing it because you really want to do it.

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Perceived Freedom: No obligation

Several participants (n=7) indicated that leisure means a time or situation where they are free from regular obligation(s). Some participants (n=4) were more specific, by saying that leisure meant that they did not feel obliged to produce anything, or they could be frivolous with their leisure. For example:

Mrs. Aguchi: Saturday morning is my time that I get to do whatever I want with because my husband goes to the gym and takes our kids to the daycare at the gym – so I don’t have to be mummy, I don’t have to be worker, I don’t have to be anything – on Saturday mornings and I love that – I can do whatever I want with it

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RH: Can you tell me about the role of leisure in your life, so first of all how do you define leisure?

Ms. Pelau: okay - em having written a couple of books on the topic now I would define it as what you do when you don’t have any obligation to do it - so its being able to do whatever you

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Mr. Maracas: To me, leisure is whatever you do when you do not have to account to someone else for the use of your time.

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RH: okay - how would you define leisure?

Mr. Dougla: emmm to me leisure is - - emmm - I almost want to say something that’s potentially a little bit frivolous - something that doesn’t have a productive purpose - emmm something that you do just because it brings enjoyment as opposed because it accomplishes an objective other than the objective of having fun, and getting some relaxation etc emm so I guess that’s how I would kinda view leisure.

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Even Mr. Hasecara, whose economic training appears to prevent him from using words such as frivolous to describe leisure (he initially equates work and leisure and any activity with utility), alludes to the point of view that leisure is time devoid of accountability. See below:
Mr. Hasecara: but that’s it – I mean I don’t do – except for the occasional soccer thing – I don’t really – I …. I just don’t have leisure time – I don’t view it that way. Whenever I have time off I always have a project like at that house to work on.

Mr. Hasecara: emmm yeah if you want to define my work as leisure - you could say that – but if you wanted to say my work is work - my leisure then is really emmm – yeah its not going out and doing sports interacting with people – my leisure is just taking care of the things I need to take care of at the house – I mean I do get utility from that – I do get utility from having everything fixed and erggg – like I want it. So to me – I guess that’s relaxing – is just taking care of my - my house.

Mr. Hasecara: I guess for me leisure is – when your not emm I- its time – whatever you chose to do – in that leisure time – its time that your not accountable to anyone for anything – right so – even in my current work that I enjoy I still have to deliver – but leisure time is – okay this person is off – of Mr. Hasecara is off – he’s on leisure time now – whatever he chooses to do – u know we don’t care and he doesn’t have to answer to us. So yeah to me – leisure is kinda just being disconnected from any kind of accountability – or output.

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Relaxation

Two commonly mentioned labels that reverberated across the participants concepts of leisure were relaxation (n=8) and fun / enjoyment (n=15). Relaxing or relaxation was used synonymously with leisure in several situations (n=4). For example:
Mrs. Balata:  
emmm its kinda absence of work [laugh] emmm I would say its doing things to relax - being creative - yep - relaxed and be creative - de-stressed.

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Mr. Hasecara:   
emmm yeah if you want to define my work as leisure - you could say that – but if you wanted to say my work is work – my leisure then is really emmm – yeah its not going out and doing sports interacting with people – my leisure is just taking care of the things I need to take care of at the house – I mean I do get utility from that – I do get utility from having everything fixed and ermmm – like I want it. So to me – I guess that’s relaxing – is just taking care of my - my house.

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RH:   how do you define leisure?  
Ms. Whewhe:  ohhh I think its just free - free time where your relaxing and enjoying what your doing- whether it be something that involves physical activity or just reading a book - emm  like a hobby - I guess your hobbies or just something that you really enjoy and your doing it because you really want to do it.

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Mrs. Vaps:  traveling isn’t really the most leisurely thing to do in my opinion. I mean if you want to really know what is the most relaxing thing to me is - going to like his parents house in Delaware, where its no nowhere, and there’s nothing to do, absolutely nothing to do, all you can do is like watch TV, go to Walmart, you know play with the cat, and that is absolutely the MOST relaxing thing to me, is that - I cant even -- you know because my office is at home, I’m always kinda a little bit - kinda always feel like its on, I’m always
at work a little bit and so I have a hard time like getting a lot of sleep - I can’t sleep like -I
can’t sleep in, I can’t sleep in on the weekends for some reason, but when we go to his
parents house and there's like absolutely nothing to do - I mean I can sleep like 12 hours
straight - that’s what I consider like a GREAT vacation

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RH: right - how do you define leisure?

Ms. Zico: emm I guess --that’s a very good question - I guess to me emmm its being relaxed and
enjoying myself - laughing emmm being able to think in creative ways being able to
think not just about my work but about personal issues or bigger social issues - just
having time that I get to control and sort of do what I want to do in that time.

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Relaxation – alleviates stress

In addition to associating leisure with pure relaxation, a couple of participants
(n=3) extended the role of relaxation, referring to it as an important combatant of stress,
or a stress reliever. For example:

RH: and can you tell me about the role of leisure in your life now?

Mr. Irie: the role of it now – I would say that it helps ageing, I would say that it helps alleviate
stress…… those are maybe the two main roles of it NOW. Doing something that is more
leisured would help alleviate stress – your life is now less stressful and emm you spend
more time being pleasant so that takes care of ageing you know.
Mr. Limer: leisure is ehhh when you do something that you really enjoy doing emmm and it kind of takes away stress rather than adding to stress. So you might say that oh I enjoy my work – I like to teach – but teaching you can never say is NOT stressful – it is stressful. So an activity that you enjoy doing that does not add to your stress level, it takes it away.

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Fun / Enjoyment

Fun, pleasure, enjoyment. These words were fundamental for the majority of the participants (n= 15) meanings of leisure. For example:

RH: How do you define leisure?

Mrs. Aguchi: I love to spend time with my kids --- emmm although I also cherish the moments when they are all under somebody else’s care and I get to think without – mummy –mummy – mum – ehhh because with 3 of them – when they are around you know it’s ‘interrupt driven’ as the computer people like to say – emm and so its I really treasure the times when they are under somebody else’s care and I can re-group and think and organize. But ....when they are around its fun and when I get to read that’s fun and when I get to be involved in my community that’s really fun

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RH: okay - how would you define leisure?

Mr. Dougla: emmm to me leisure is - - emmm - I almost want to say something that’s potentially a little bit frivolous - something that doesn’t have a productive purpose - emmm something
that you do just because it brings enjoyment as opposed because it accomplishes an objective other than the objective of having fun, and getting some relaxation etc emm so I guess that’s how I would kinda view leisure.

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Ms. Kaiser: emhh that’s difficult - I think I define leisure like when I don’t have to be anywhere- I don’t have to know what time it is, I don’t have to schedule anything, you know its like I’m just kinda loose to do whatever I want and emmm I can do it as long as I’m enjoying myself and then whatever it is - that’s for me is leisure - nothing scheduled.

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RH: how would you define leisure?
Mrs. Razzam: emmm I would say its – you know - it’s the pursuit of alternate interests and relaxation and pleasure.

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RH: how do you define leisure?
Ms. Whewhe: ohhh I think its just free - free time where your relaxing and enjoying what your doing- whether it be something that involves physical activity or just reading a book - emm like a hobby - I guess your hobbies or just something that you really enjoy and your doing it because you really want to do it.
Family

The association between leisure and family resonated with of the downshifters (n=10). Some (n=3) were adjusting to the relatively new additions in their lives and were slightly unsure of whether playing with their children really constituted leisure. Others (n=4) with large families enjoyed family time but were aware of the associated constrictions on their leisure, such as running the children around to games, lessons and limited travel because of the children. For example:

RH: How do you define leisure?

Mrs. Aguchi: I love to spend time with my kids --- emmm although I also cherish the moments when they are all under somebody else's care and I get to think without – mummy – mummy – mum – ehhh because with 3 of them – when they are around you know it’s ‘interrupt driven’ as the computer people like to say – emm and so its I really treasure the times when they are under somebody else’s care and I can re-group and think and organize. But ....when they are around its fun and when I get to read that’s fun and when I get to be involved in my community that’s really fun

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Mr. Callaloo: there's never enough - ehhmm - but I’m content now, because I think that right now we've been able to strike a balance - you know I don't know how your doing the sampling but when you have a family especially a big family like ours - ergh leisure can’t be every weekend going to the Bahamas - erghh you know stuff like that

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Mr. Dougla: *I mean also probably a complicating factor is we've got 4 small kids - so erggh - I dunno know if - its like just the things of taking care of kids* [he is referring to whether this can be leisure] *I don’t know if you count that as leisure or not - but ehh it sure keeps you busy*

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Mr. Gyul: *I play the piano I - I - spend a good deal of time on the computer - not playing any games but em I actually enjoy reading and communicating with my friends - emm I do - I do some reading at home - and then a lot of - *and I guess you would count this as a leisure activity - playing with my children*

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RH: *When you’re spending time with the family do you - in your mind do you think that is leisure or an obligation?*

Mr. Soucouyant: *ohh emm well it depends - if its an activities like birthday parties with little kids running around with cake all over their face and trying to keep me cool then that’s an obligation [somewhat jokingly], but most of the time, I would say 98% of the time its very much leisure and I - I do not take it for granted.*

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RH: *yeah*

Mr. Xante: *now I don’t really know if it’s changed that much .. I I I’m *I pride myself as being somewhat of a family man, emmm if my kids had games I would try very hard to be able to make it to the them. I try to do that now, if my kids have any kind of activities,*
whether it be a band concert or [???] concert erggh you know a spring event a scouting event, emmm whatever they have, I try to make it a point of trying to make there -

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(Activity)

Several participants (n=11) talked about their meaning of leisure in terms of it being an activity, either in terms of playing a sport (n=5) or doing projects (n=6), staying active or just staying busy. For example:

Mr. Gyul: so a lot of leisure time is actually spent with my children - leisure is also sports for me - I love real tennis - I love golf - I love emmm - I run on a regular basis - we - we try to go on a couple of vacations a year - we have an annual vacation own to the Caribbean we take and then we try to go skiing out west at least once a year.

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Mrs. Unitas: for us its really about being active or outdoors - playing ...... or you know going to a spa - but its more just kinda of - well there’s also a lot of hanging out that we do and reading and things like that - I think that is leisure.

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In contrast to the aforementioned quotes, Mrs. Vaps expressed that leisure does mean activity for her, her preference is for non-active types of leisure.
Mrs. Vaps: I mean I have a husband who drags me out like hiking, and biking and all that stuff so yeah I enjoy it but if it were up to me - I mean I would [laughs] I would be at the bar watching a football game [laughs] or you know I just like to do things that are reeeallly chill

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Although not specifying a particular activity, several participants (n=6) indicated that their notion of leisure entailed doing projects or activities. For example:

Mr. Hasecara: but that’s it – I mean I don’t do – except for the occasional soccer thing – I don’t really –I …. I just don’t have leisure time – I don’t view it that way. *Whenever I have time off I always have a project like at that house to work on*

Mr. Hasecara: emmm yeah if you want to define my work as leisure - you could say that – but if you wanted to say my work is work - my leisure then is really emmm – yeah its not going out and doing sports interacting with people – *my leisure is just taking care of the things I need to take care of at the house – I mean I do get utility from that – I do get utility from having everything fixed and erggg – like I want it. So to me – I guess that’s relaxing – is just taking care of my - my house.*

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Mrs. Tabanca: actually emm . …… I guess its emmm – it’s not a huge priority in my life emm … I even during my down…..or my leisure time if you will….some of what I do.. *A lot of what I did at UCF was spend it doing things like home projects – and so it wasn’t doing things like - u know - playing tennis and stuff like that. It was doing home projects, I did a lot*
of that, I mean I painted everything in our house, I mean if you stood still I would paint you. I painted furniture, I painted walls, I painted everything.  

_Emmm and that was my ways of spending leisure – emm my leisure time. But it is still WORK to me I have to accomplish something during my leisure time – I can't just SIT and watch TV – I have to be doing something._

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**Absence of work**

When defining leisure in their own words some participants (n=5) referred to it as the opposite of work or the absence of work. For example:

_Mrs. Balata: emmm its kinda absence of work [she laughs] emmm I would say its doing things to relax - being creative - yep - relaxed and be creative - de-stressed –

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_Mr. Irie: I would define it as doing something that don’t feel like work, I define it as something as very pleasurable – that gives you satisfying results, at the end of the day you feel satisfied, u know when you do it u feel very satisfied

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_Mr. Limer: leisure is ehhh when you do something that you really enjoy doing emmm and it kind of takes away stress rather than adding to stress. So you might say that oh I enjoy my work – I like to teach – but teaching you can never say is NOT stressful – it is stressful. So an activity that you enjoy doing that does not add to your stress level, it takes it away._
Although Mrs. Vaps works in what could be considered a leisurely domain (she is a feature travel writer, which requires her to travel and visit touristy locations), her perspective highlights the point that leisure signifies an absence of work, because when she is in a typical touristy spot it no longer feels like leisure for her.

Mrs. Vaps: for me, because I work in that industry [she writes for a travel magazine]- that is my work [laughs] emmm and I work for a magazine emm I write about homes and travel and food and lifestyle - so - that’s what I do in work weekday and I think about it constantly. For me leisure is - would be NOT that, which to me is, I hate to say this - its kinda like emmm - don’t know what the right word is emmm to me leisure is - like going on vacations to me is not leisure because I travel - and I’m a travel writer and its different - and its a different type of stress - and I cant stop thinking - so for me leisure is NOT traveling, its NOT vacationing, its not like working - you know its not thinking about design or decor, or the typical things that people do on the weekends or do for leisure, for me its - I mean quite honestly its like sitting in front of the television watching football or [laughs] well –

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**Being Creative**

Notions of creativity transpired across a few participants (n=6) descriptions of what leisure meant to them. For example:
RH: right - how do you define leisure?

Mrs. Zico: emm I guess --that’s a very good question - I guess to me emmm its being relaxed and enjoying myself - laughing emmm being able to think in creative ways being able to think not just about my work but about personal issues or bigger social issues - just having time that I get to control and sort of do what I want to do in that time.

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Mrs. Balata: emmm its kinda absence of work [laugh] emmm I would say its doing things to relax - being creative - yep - relaxed and be creative - de-stressed -

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Mr. Jouvert: that’s your best question – I don’t know if I have.....I call it unstructured time and I think that to me is necessary to incubate ideas u know – I don’t even know what those ideas might be, just like stare out the window or go for a walk, or to see what comes to me, or what occurs to me, and I think there is a thing, its like having a relationship with myself and in going thru that relationship that I feel like I can relate to other people.....easier – more easily. Or else what I tend to see is a lot of undigested ideas that are just simply trotted out and that’s extremely tedious -

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Balance

The word leisure signified balance for several participants (n=5). Ms. Ent, for example, overtly declined to use the word leisure, expressing the opinion that balance
more appropriately captured the notion of leisure for her. Others talked in terms of balance between their work and leisure. For example:

RH: how would you define leisure?

Ms. Ent: You know to me a better word frankly is balance – it’s not so much about separating the work and the leisure – as it is about living in a balanced way.

RH: okay, so the term leisure actually has connotations of separation for you?

Ms. Ent: it does yes – emm I think balance more accurately describes it for me – when life and work are in balance and it’s harmonious.

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RH: what about leisure in your life now?

Mr. Callaloo: there’s never enough - ehmmm - but I’m content now, because I think that right now we’ve been able to strike a balance - you know I don’t know how your doing the sampling but when you have a family especially a big family like ours - ergh leisure cant be every weekend going to the Bahamas - erghh you know stuff like that

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RH: okay and how about the role of leisure in your life now - can you talk about that a little bit.

Ms. Whewhe: emm I would say that I have a very nice balance now with work and leisure - and I’ve had a lot more opportunities to get involved in activities that I enjoy that aren't related to work. emmm so I would say that it’s probably 60(work) -40(leisure) in my life now

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**Traveling**

Before being directly asked about their vacations (see appendix E: Interview protocol) several downshifters (n=8) referenced vacations or traveling as a significant element of what leisure meant to them. For example:

RH: so leisure is really about relaxing for you?

Mr. Quidat: yeah its about eghhh relaxing - well travel is a part of leisure and its maybe a bit of exploring - its about not being eghhh told or required that I have to be somewhere - its more of control over your own time - I think that would work

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Mrs. Razzam: emmm yeahh – I mean its – its- its seems to be emmm it seems to be where I kind of like its – leisure is more activity for me than it is non-activity – I guess . i.e. sports and traveling and emmm u know taking different courses and things like that – so to me leisure is just – free time to do other things you’re interested in.

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However, Mrs. Vaps actually contradicted this viewpoint, but this is essentially because of the nature of her work. For example:

Mrs. Vaps: for me, because I work in that industry - that is my work [laughs] emmm and I work for a magazine emm I write about homes and travel and food and lifestyle - so - that’s what I do in work weekday and I think about it constantly. For me leisure is - would be NOT that, which to me is, I hate to say this - its kinda like emmm - don’t know what the right
word is emmm to me leisure is - like going on vacations to me is not leisure because I travel -and I’m a travel writer and its different - and its a different type of stress - and I can’t stop thinking - so for me leisure is NOT traveling, its NOT vacationing, its not like working - you know its not thinking about design or decor, or the typical things that people do on the weekends or do for leisure, for me its - I mean quite honestly its like sitting in front of the television watching football or [laughs] well –traveling isn’t really the most leisurely thing to do in my opinion. I mean if you want really know what is the most relaxing thing to me is - going to like his parents house in Delaware, where its nowhere, and there’s nothing to do, absolutely nothing to do, all you can do is like watch TV, go to Wal-Mart, you know play with the cat, and that is absolutely the MOST relaxing thing to me right now.

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**Doing nothing, Hanging out & Watching TV**

Several participants (n=5) referenced the notion of doing nothing, or watching TV as playing a role in their meaning of leisure. For example:

Mrs. Unitas: for us its really about being active or outdoors - playing ...... or you know going to a spa - but its more just kinda of - well there’s also a lot of hanging out that we do and reading and things like that - I think that is leisure

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Mrs. Vaps: so for me leisure is NOT traveling, its NOT vacationing, its not like working - you know its not thinking about design or decor, or the typical things that people do on the
weekends or do for leisure, for me its - *I mean quite honestly its like sitting in front of the television watching football or [laughs] well chilling out.*  

Traveling isn’t really the most leisurely thing to do in my opinion. *I mean if you want to really know what is the most relaxing thing to me is - going to like his parents house in Delaware, where its no nowhere, and there’s nothing to do, absolutely nothing to do, all you can do is like watch TV, go to Wal-Mart, you know play with the cat, and that is absolutely the MOST relaxing thing to me right now, is that - I cant even -- you know because my office is at home, I’m always kinda a little bit - kinda always feel like its on, I’m always at work a little bit and so I have a hard time like getting a lot of sleep - I can’t sleep like - I can’t sleep in, I cant sleep in on the weekends for some reason, but when we go to his parents house and there's like absolutely nothing to do - I mean I can sleep like 12 hours straight - that’s what I consider like a GREAT vacation*

*I mean I have a husband who drags me out like hiking, and biking and all that stuff so yeah I enjoy it but if it were up to me - I mean I would [laughs] I would be at the bar watching a football game [laughs] or you know I just like to do things that are reeeallly chill*

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*Mr. Quidat: and you can throw in some fly fishing in there as well - I was out there this past Sunday - it was totally beautiful - minds totally blank - this is what it’s all about –relaxing*

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*Mrs. Tabanca’s following statement provides strong counter evidence that this mentality is by no means universal amongst the downshifters. For example:
Mrs. Tabanca: actually emm. ….. I guess it’s not a huge priority in my life emm … I even
during my down…..or my leisure time if you will…some of what I do… a lot of what I did
at UCF was spend it doing things like home projects – and so it wasn’t doing things like
- u know - playing tennis and stuff like that. It was doing home projects, I did a lot of
that, I mean I painted everything in our house, I mean if you stood still I would paint you.
I painted furniture, I painted walls, and I painted everything. Emmm and that was my
way of spending leisure – emm my leisure time. But it still WORK – to me I have to
accomplish something during my leisure time – I can’t just SIT and watch TV – I have to
be doing something.

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Themes that emerged from the data indicating changes in leisure were: more active/ more energy; changes in perceived leisure; no change, just more of it; less pressure (no longer a rare commodity, time is not so compressed, less intense, more relaxed and less rushed, not so a grand affair or doesn't have to be perfect, and just less pressure to have fun); less work on weekends; no more Sunday night dread; less work on vacations; the hidden costs of vacations previously; and an organic lifestyle development (balance between work and leisure, work is the same as leisure, more flexible and spontaneous, fit work around leisure, integrated or holistic leisure).

Less Pressure

One of the significant changes in leisure for the downshifters interviewed was a relaxation of pressure surrounding their leisure experiences. This reduced pressure was seen in a variety of ways, less peer pressure, or less of a feeling to optimize the use of leisure because it was a rare commodity are two examples. Combined together, eight labels made up the theme of ‘less pressure’. Following are examples of the labels.

Less Pressure: Rare Commodity

This label parallels the basic economic principle of supply and demand. A product with low supply economic theory tells us will normally be in high demand. This was the case for the participants (n=6) prior to downshifting; the ‘product’ with low supply being leisure time, and it was in high demand. This dearth of leisure time put a psychological pressure on the participants to optimize whatever leisure they did have. For example:
Mr. Dougla: one of the things that I really like now is - before - weekends were almost like - like I almost felt like weekends had to be perfect - because I felt like they were such a rare commodity - that and - so I felt like gee I got to - you know – I’ve got to maximize my time on the weekend - because gee I got to go back to work on Monday morning.

Mr. Dougla: and that was also the case with vacation days - emmm because there were also a finite number of them and I’d better not waste them and things like that

Mr. Dougla: - but I definitely feel less - like I feel yeah we can go do this and it doesn’t matter if that’s the BEST thing to do or if that’s the most productive use of our time or whatever - because I feel like well we can always do something tomorrow or next week or whatever - so its more just itttt- because it doesn’t feel like as - before it felt like this rare precious commodity and now it - I’m not saying its not valuable - I’m just saying because I have a little more freedom to do it at MY - you know when I want - it very much feels like - very much less like I have to make everything perfect

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Less Pressure: Make it Perfect / Unusual

This is a similar concept to the previous label, the preciousness of the leisure time in the past made the participants (n=8) want to optimize their leisure time by doing something unusual or just make the little leisure time they had perfect. For example:

RH: can you describe in general now - some of the differences in the way you experience leisure now as compared to before you downshifted.
Less Pressure: More Relaxed / Less Rushed

By downshifting, several of the participants (n=9) expressed a feeling of reduced pressure on their leisure, and this manifested itself by expressions of feeling more relaxed during their leisure or less rushed. For example:
RH: can you describe some of the differences in the way you experience leisure now as compared to before you downshifted?

Mrs. Razzam: I feel more relaxed.

RH: a lot more relaxed?

Mrs. Razzam: yeah like it’s not as….or…I’m not as….like ….I even feel a little bit guilty too. You know – like I feel guilty if I wasn’t working or ….u know- not like pangs of guilt, but you know just kinda like I should be doing this – *I hurried through things – now I just don’t hurry do much. I would hurry until things weren’t fun.*

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RH: do you find you start doing more leisurely things during the week now as a tennis instructor?

Mr. Naranga: emmmm… yeah well its funny because now my leisure time is not dominated by like playing sports and going out with my friends – now my leisure time has become more individual – because when I was working all the time, my leisure time would be to catch up with – because I didn’t really work with any of my friends – so it would be to catch up with my friends and u know hang out with my fiancé or girlfriend or whatever it was at the time – and now my leisure time is okay I’ll read books or I’ll relax by myself or I’ll u know…. Plan out my day so that when I have time off to do whatever it is I need to want to do – emmm so I guess if leisure, however you define it, its definitely……*its almost too relaxed.* Its make me feel like I’m [laughs] removing myself from society sometimes. – It’s kinda strange.

RH: did you ever feel rushed in your leisure as an engineer?

Mr. Naranga: yeah….oh yeah – yeah because I mean – yeah – I felt like you just had to – like I would say as an engineer *I never felt – like if what I’m experiencing now is pure leisure [laughs] maybe as an engineer I never really experienced that because everybody is so tight with
their schedule. Like I guess tennis was, because sometimes you could just play for – I
don’t know – as long as it takes – 2 hrs, hour and 45 u know whatever it takes, but most
of the time you’d meet people, you’d work out for an hour, maybe go play basketball for
30 minutes or so and its just like there was a structure. And emmm

RH: right

Mr. Naranga: but now I have – like today, you and I could talk for another 4 hours, I mean I’m not
working until 4pm. So it’s totally crazy that way, its really weird.

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Mrs. Vaps:  yeah playing very hard and you know I don’t know if that’s a function of age or not, but I do know that - I do know that when I had really stressful periods - you know I seemed to - I tended to like party more - which is kinda weird, but I notice, its my way of blowing off steam somehow

RH:  do you do that now, since you downshifted?

Mrs. Vaps:  emmm maybe once in a while, just kinda rare now, its really emmm you know what’s really strange is that emmm when I was practicing law you felt like you had the need to drink and you had the need for anything that would take the stress off of you, so I know that - you know I have friends who are like dentists, really high level graphic designers, they are all client service you know - and we were all so incredibly stressed out and sooo - I mean - I do know that it wasn’t just the lawyer profession and people were really burned out and people really felt the need - the real need to be drugged in some way or the other - you know to just take the anxiety off just for a few hours you know. So that was definitely - leisure then was definitely different - like really trying hard to - whatever you could do just to escape really was leisure. emmm and leisure now is like [laughs] maybe I’ve learned - but I really I really value sleep above so many things now, its so key to get enough sleep, so to me leisure is like sleeping, lounging and you know its TOTALLY different to what it used to be. Its not that we don’t go out anymore, but emmm going out to me, my perception of it has changed.

Mrs. Vaps:  and then there’s this - this kinda like - I notice this - I don’t want to call it syndrome - but when your working that hard during the week - you have like this overwhelming - you have this feeling like - oh my god I worked so hard I better make use of my weekend - you know you wanna play hard because you worked so hard - you know you feel so guilty if - if you sit around all weekend its emm kinda a waste given how much you know that you have to go back to work and work really hard and your not going to have any free time - so its kinda - and I’ve noticed this in a lot of people who work like this - they work so hard that they really feel like - guilty if they don’t play twice as hard on the weekends.
Less Pressure: To have fun with leisure

The irony of feeling forced to enjoy leisure because of the time squeeze was realized by several participants (n=5). For example:

RH: can you describe just in general now, some of the differences in the way you experience leisure as compared to before you downshifted?

Mr. Jouvert: emmm yeah well I definitely felt much more time pressure and I felt there was only so much .....I had to fit in a lot of things in a SHORT amount of time. So yeah I think I felt more .... In fact I felt more of a pressure to enjoy myself, you know, so that was, and that is so counter productive, its like trying to be happy – I mean its just impossible catch 22

RH: so you felt – before you downshifted, you felt in your leisure time you felt a big pressure to enjoy yourself?

Mr. Jouvert: yeah – and that’s a bit like this notion of happiness of being conflated with merriment.

Ms. Zico I think that in my old life I really did feel like - you know - its been a month - I haven’t done anything fun, I have to sort of set a goal - you know, or do something fun, or this is missing I need to fit it in, and now it just feels like its there and its balanced and I’m not even consciously thinking about fitting it in, it just already is
By reducing the pressure on their leisure time, several participants (n=3) were much more capable of ‘being present’ in the moment during their leisure time and consequently enjoying the leisure experience more. For example:

Ms. Yuhtink:  *my overall experience is just that it’s much more part of my daily life and much more part of my every activity – so – so that there’s softness to the edges of everything that I do.*

Ms. Yuhtink:  *So it’s - now, now its about staying steady – its about – whether I’m doing the work or whether I’m doing the leisure activity or whether I’m by myself not knowing what I’m going to be doing [laughs] its like all the same sort of pace and its not these bursts of like - okay THIS has to happen during this hour - okay now I’m off from that and now THIS has to happen – NOW I’m going to enjoy myself, NOW I’m going to work - NOW I’m going to enjoy myself and sort of starts and stops. It’s much more about JUST BEING in it.*

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RH: can you describe some of the differences in the way you experience leisure now as compared to before you downshifted?

Ms. Balata:  *it’s a very distinctive change - now I'm fully in the moment when I'm doing my leisure time activities - now I’m with friends – enjoying myself - whereas the leisure time I had when I was working a tough job was more about escaping.*

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Less Pressure: Because leisure time is not so compressed

This label is similar to the reduced pressure label, the time gain associated with their downshift was much appreciated by several participants (n=8). It was expressed by feeling less compressed in their leisure. For example:

RH:  can you describe just in general now, some of the differences in the way you experience leisure as compared to before you downshifted?

Mr. Jouvert:  emmm yeah well I definitely felt much more time pressure and I felt there was only so much .....I had to fit in a lot of things in a SHORT amount of time. So yeah I think I felt more …. In fact I felt more of a pressure to enjoy myself, you know, so that was, and that is so counter productive, its like trying to be happy – I mean its just impossible catch 22

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Mrs. Aguchi:  there was a lot more sense of frantically trying to catch up – u know the evenings during the week were a much shorter and things aren’t getting done and so it was a matter on the weekend – you’d pick the most burning critical thing that had to get done and you’d do that emmm it just seemed like I was trying to pack a whole weeks worth of life into 2 days

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Mr. Gyul:  when I was the CFO the typical weekend was crammed with all of the leisure things that I was not able to do during the week - I would almost always run both Friday and Saturday - emm if I was playing sports - I would play sports on the weekend - I would - I enjoy reading too - I would almost exclusively do that on the weekends. So it was as if
my leisure time had to be packed into those 2 days. whereas now -- erghgh I have leisure
time spread throughout the week - and I don’t approach the weekend with the feeling of -
oh okay I’ve got to emm plan - I have to take advantage of all these emm things I want to
do - because the weekend is coming up and that’s my only - only possibility –

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Ms. Yuhtink: before I downshifted my weekend was packed with …. Catch up from the previous ….
relax from the previous week – do all the things that I didn’t get done during the week –
prepare for the next week and basically be miserable … by Sunday night [laughs]

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Ms. Zico: typical weekend - I still would exercise in the morning emm but I think I just had an
intensity of my weekend that there is so much I need to get done and so I would be racing
out the door getting lots of errands done, a lot of things needed to be squeezed in,

Ms. Zico: yes exactly a lot more rushed and hurried and just a lot more things I recall needing to
be done, because I hadn’t - like during my week now I have time to fit in grocery
shopping. I have time to fit in a few errands here and there - so when I was back in my
more stressful busy days I think everything was saved for the weekend, so just a lot of
rushing, and house cleaning and stress around what needed to be done.

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No change, just more of it

Numerous participants (n=9) indicated that there was no change in their leisure activities since downshifting, they felt the most significant change was simply that there was just more time to do the activity(ies). For example:

RH: did those activities that you enjoy doing when you are at home - did they change along with the downshift?

Ms. Whewhe: emmm I would say they are probably about the same - the types of activities – it’s probably just more so - I didn’t have as much time to do them.

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RH: has there been a significant change in the types of activities you do or?

MS. Yuhtink: there’s been a significant shift in the way I SEE the activities that I do - I don’t think there’s necessarily been that much shift in what I do – but it’s like it feels like something I’m enjoying as opposed to something I’m trying to squeeze in and I’m doing more of it – more of all of those things.

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Change in perceived leisure

Several participants (n=5) touched on the perspective that before they downshifted they perceived themselves to have no leisure and since downshifting the big difference is that they do perceive themselves to have leisure. For example:
RH: is there any way those activities changed from when you were in the corporate world?

Mr. Callaloo: no first of all, in the old days - during the week there was no leisure time anyway - I would be too tired, I would drive - I commuted - so it was an hour to work so - I would come home and probably go to sleep - there’s many more hours now to talk to the kids stuff like that.

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Mrs. Tabanca: sleeping [ laughing ] I didn’t do ANYTHING - I swear it sounds like such a terrible life, I did NOTHING – and I was always tired emm – I did nothing and emm part of it was also at that point we were renting houses and now we own a house – but emmm so there was no point [in doing DIY] but I did nothing – I didn’t do crafts, I didn’t cook - I didn’t do anything emmm everything I ever enjoyed doing that I do - I don’t like cooking but I like baking emm anything I ever enjoyed doing - I didn’t do ONE BIT of them when I was a lawyer. So its really hard to thing to say – emm I love – I used to love riding my bike, I never did it when I was a lawyer – emm I love baking emm I never did it – there wasn’t any point in doing home DIY projects because we rented a house – but before I started DIY projects I would bake but emmm and then as soon as I became a lawyer I never had time for it.

Mrs. Tabanca: emm well the biggest – the BIGGEST change is that I HAVE leisure time. Emmm I didn’t have any leisure time as a lawyer. And certainly even if I did have some leisure time, which would have been like my Sundays - they didn’t feel like leisure time because they felt like catch up time. They felt like time for me to catch up with what I hadn’t accomplished during the week. Emmm and so it certainly never felt like I had ANY leisure time. Emm ........ as opposed to now – when I chose what I want to do, when I want to do it and u know- how I want to do it and that’s the one thing
More active / More energy

Many participants (n=13) appealed to the idea that their downshift had freed them from tiring routines and reinvigorated them energy wise. For example:

RH: What leisure activities did you enjoy doing in the home in the past? was there a change in what you did since you downshifted?

Mr. Soucouyant: emm it - not really - I think it was the same ones, although I have to say the leisure activity back when I was working was really just kinda plopping down - I’ve noticed - here’s another thing that I’ve kinda been noticing and I don’t know if its kinda of an age thing or just the downshifting - but I’m noticing I’m much less sedentary - I’m much more active - I don’t just come home from and plop myself in the chair of couch - I find myself being a little more active

Mr. Soucouyant: eghhh - apart from being more fit and not having such a sedentary life, that’s affected my leisure time, and I can exercise or do those extra walks or whatever I’m going to do actively on my vacation or in my leisure time, emm a little bit more free to do that - rather than saying - nahh I don’t feel like doing walking at all - so I think I’m going to stay home and I’ll stay here - or lets drive there - lets not take a walk lets drive. Now I’m a little more prone to - let’s go for a walk lets go explore.

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RH: can you cast your mind back to when you were working - what was a typical weekend like then?
Ms. Pelau: *immediately before I downshifted I spent almost the whole of Saturday sleeping -
honestly I just was so sleep deprived - so Saturday would be sleeping and Sunday would be grocery shopping, dry cleaning, laundry, hang out with friends emm you know not a - not too much out of the ordinary just kinda hang out at the pub and have a few beers but I didn’t pursue a lot of hobbies - I didn’t go to the gym on the weekend

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Mrs. Tabanca: *Sundays, I would usually just sleep in. and emm it was really just recuperating from the week. And often it was working actually – I would bring work home on the weekends.*

RH: did you feel physically drained on the weekends?

Mrs. Tabanca: absolutely

RH: and the weekends as a professor do you feel more energized?

Mrs. Tabanca: absolutely

Mrs. Tabanca: *but generally I would wake up at about 6 or 630am and be in the office at 8am and leave every night at about 8pm. Emm and when I came home I would do NOTHING – I mean NOTHING. I didn’t cook I didn’t clean I didn’t do anything – I did nothing – I was 100% a vegetable.*

RH: just pooped out?

Mrs. Tabanca: I was absolutely useless

Mrs. Tabanca: *sleeping [laughing] I didn’t do ANYTHING - I swear it sounds like such a terrible life, I did NOTHING – and I was always tired emm*

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Ms. Zico: *my ex-husband also worked at Microsoft and we were so tired and drained and we didn’t want to cook we always went out to dinner, it may not have been a fancy place, but we*
would go out for a burrito or out for Thai food, and then come home and again still pretty tired so just pop on the TV or pop in a movie and feeling like you need to get to bed at 1030-11 because you've got to get up the next morning, and often checking email at night too before you go to bed.

Ms. Zico: I usually end the day thinking about what I want to have for dinner and come home and can prepare a nice healthy meal, relax, and have enough energy to go see a movie on a weeknight, eemmm, I don’t watch much television at all now which really what I mostly did in my old life. I read - I go on walks at night with my boyfriend, I do research - I - I feel very relaxed but still very productive.

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**Organic lifestyle development** –

This theme evolved through several labels, each having the common tie of being related to something ‘natural’. In one label this was relaying development to the human body or biological analogies, other labels entailed an integrated or holistic vision for their lifestyles, especially with regards to the relationship between work and leisure.

Organic Development: Biological context –

Some participants (n=4) made reference to the changes in their lives by referencing the human body or they made reference to the natural world providing context for an organic theme, for example:
RH:  can u describe the downshifting process that you went thru - so things like why did you decide to
downshift and how did you do it?

Ms. Ent:  *emmm it was actually more organic and *something that evolved as opposed to a
conscious decision that I made one day - that I was all of a sudden going to change
everything

Ms. Ent:  *… sometimes I will just take a day in the middle of the week off and I’ll go to the beach
or something – *em or I’ll decide that I want to work on Saturday because it feels like the
right thing to do – but its more of an ORGANIC thing than anything else – organic keeps
coming back for me – the whole process is an incredibly organic one and I guess that
makes sense as well because I am *ehhh a believer in the ‘systems thinking model’ that –
many of our companies and organizations were previously built around the “machine
model” and if we think about them in a more organic biological way – the things make a
lot more sense and the cultures inside those organizations also become more humane and
emmm understandable

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RH:  has leisure become more meaningful for you since your downshift?

MS. Yuhtink:  definitely

RH:  in what way?

MS. Yuhtink:  *I feel like I’m more away of who I am and how I want to be in the world - and I’m using
that as my litmus test for what I want to do – like what action I want to take in the world
or what work I want to have – as opposed to having that external frame set and trying to
figure out who I am around that so its like more organically from the inside out leading
me forward.

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Organic Development: Balance

Although not overtly used by many participants (n=2), the notion of balance achieved through the downshift permeated many conversations. For example:

Ms. Ent: You know to me a better word frankly is balance – it’s not so much about separating the work and the leisure – as it is about living in a balanced way. And --- integrating all the aspects of your life in a holistic way – so that there isn’t this separation – I think its when there is this really distinct separateness its almost like a – see saw – where you have this [?peter?] cutter effect – whereas – I don’t – I don’t – that doesn’t work for me – that that metaphor if you will. I think for me it’s more integrated now

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Ms. Zico: I think that in my old life I really did feel like - you know - its been a month - I haven’t done anything fun, I have to sort of set a goal - you know, or do something fun, or this is missing I need to fit it in, and now it just feels like its there and its balanced and I’m not even consciously thinking about fitting it in, it just already is

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than work, so for instance they could mold work around leisure rather than vice versa.

For example:

**RH:** what is a typical weekday like for you now?

**Mr. Jouvert:** ehhh well very much about being able to manage my own time – so I will on ---

Tuesday and Thursday morning ehh or lunchtime I will go play badminton for a couple of hours and I will ...emmm kind of work my work around that

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**Ms. Zico:** I think one difference is that I used to have to really fit it in around my work - and now if I want to take a class - that’s going to be a priority and I will fit my work in around it [the class]. that’s one huge difference, I think I was always trying to cram things - like I guess I’m forgetting - when I did work at Microsoft I loved singing and I love music and so was doing that on the side, that was another leisure activity. but I always - it always felt like I had to fit that around Microsoft. - like what nights am I not going to be working late or – and now I feel that I prioritize leisure, if I want to do a singing class I will just have to work around it.

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Organic Development: Work is the same as leisure

While certainly not a universal truth amongst this study’s participants, several of them (n=5) indicated that their downshift narrowed the gap between work and leisure, or leisure became more work like and vice versa, work became more leisure like for them.
Thus, what they did for work was also considered to be close to what they do for leisure.

For example:

Ms. Ent: oh my gosh – you know what I don’t distinguish between weekends and my week days – my life is very organic now – and emm as I think I indicated in the survey – I know your eventually going to ask me about leisure time but the reason I don’t distinguish is – I love my work and I don’t view my work as WORK or something separate from ……. the rest of my life – its a very integrated piece of my …my life. And so I don’t divide my week up that way and I don’t – I don’t my life up in terms of play and work either – because a lot of what I do – I consider play [laughs] and some people would say that’s how you make a living and that cant be play –but I would say that it very much falls into that domain – because that’s kinda very much how it evolved.

RH: sounds like – especially with your reference to organic that what your living now is – you are working but the nature of the work is a lot more enjoyable in terms of - if you think in terms of work and leisure as 2 spheres – they are almost overlapped for you right now?

Ms. Ent: absolutely because to me they are not 2 spheres – if they are – they are in terms of a Venn diagram – there is more overlap than not.

RH: yeah – whereas before were those spheres almost separate?

Ms. Ent: yes absolutely – well you know what that’s not fair – because there were certain projects that I did enjoy – but I would say again using this Venn diagram model – there would have been significantly less overlap than now.

Ms. Ent: and finding all the course material I built it around case studies and shopping online at the Harvard Business school publishing house – that’s fun to me – I now that I’m probably leading into areas that people would say “that’s not supposed to be fun, and that’s not leisure – your working” but to me that’s fun.
Mr. Hasecara: *but every one of those exercises I do for work... everyone of those things that I do during the day, whether it’s teaching, meeting with students, reading, writing – I just .... I like ALL of that. So essentially – and this is what – my profile and my attitude is going to be maybe different from many people but maybe not – I don’t know – is that this is essentially my leisure*

When questioned a little further on the idea that his work is his leisure, Mr. Hasecara was not quite so sure.

Mr. Hasecara: *emmm yeah if you want to define my work as leisure - you could say that – but if you wanted to say my work is work - my leisure then is really emmm – yeah its not going out and doing sports interacting with people – my leisure is just taking care of the things I need to take care of at the house – I mean I do get utility from that – I do get utility from having everything fixed and erggg – like I want it. So to me – I guess that’s relaxing – is just taking care of my - my house.*

RH:  *interestingly enough – when you teach yoga – I know it sounds like you consider yoga a leisure activity -but when you teach it – do you still get the same enjoyment?*

MS. Yuhtink:  *emmm more [laughs] its been a emmm its been really satisfying because its deep into my own practice – so I still feel like its – my joy – its fun – its – there is not any part of my life right now – that I dread having to do.*
Mrs. Vaps interview provided interesting contrary insight into this concept. She downshifted from a job that she didn’t enjoy (lawyer) and didn’t feel much intuition for, to a job that was much better suited to her natural skill set (travel writer). She still however made a clear distinction between work and leisure, for example:

Mrs. Vaps: sometimes obviously work spills over into the weekends - once in a while - I mean I work - I don’t want to say I work just as hard as I did as when I was a lawyer, I mean I work extremely hard - but its very different because when you love what you do, it somehow doesn’t feel as painful

Mrs. Vaps: I mean I work for a magazine that covers coastal areas, so that when I go on vacation I CANNOT go somewhere where there is water, or I cant stop working in my head - you know- so most people have this idea of like -sitting on an island,

RH: so that’s the furthest from what you want to do?

Mrs. Vaps: I want to get as far away from water as possible - I mean - I wanna go into the mountains, and you know my ideal, for me seriously my ideal is just like reading something that has nothing to do with anything, that just - you know - I wanna just read a book that has nothing to do with travel or anything

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Organic Development: Integrated / holistic / weekends like weekdays

Numerous participants (n=8) referred to the phenomenon of not differentiating between weekdays and weekends since their downshift. ‘Integrated’ and ‘holistic’ were
used by some of the participants to describe less compartmentalization between work and leisure. For example:

**Ms. Ent:** I love my work and I don’t view my work as WORK or something separate from the rest of my life – it’s a very integrated piece of my life. _And so I don’t divide my week up that way_ and I don’t – I don’t split my life up in terms of play and work either – because a lot of what I do – I consider play

**Ms. Ent:** oh my gosh – you know what? I don’t distinguish between weekends and my week days – my life is very organic now – and emm as I think I indicated in the survey – I know your eventually going to ask me about leisure time but the reason I don’t distinguish is – _I love my work and I don’t view my work as WORK or something separate from …… the rest of my life – its a very integrated piece of my life. And so I don’t divide my week up that way_ and I don’t – I don’t split my life up in terms of play and work either – because a lot of what I do – I consider play [laughs] and some people would say that’s how you make a living and that can’t be play –but I would say that it very much falls into that domain – because that’s kinda very much how it evolved.

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**RH:** yep - so now you feel like you have a lot more opportunity - if you want to go play tennis - you can go play in the week rather than having to compartmentalize it all into the weekend.

**Mr. Gyul:** _exactly and that’s the difference - right now - to boil it down - I would say - the weekend is not that much different than any other day of the week_

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**Mr. Soucouyant:** emm it - not really - I think it was the same ones, although I have to say the leisure activity back when I was working was really just kinda plopping down - I’ve noticed -
here’s another thing that I’ve kinda been noticing and I don’t know if its kinda of an age thing or just the downshifting - but I’m noticing I’m much less sedentary - I’m much more active - I don’t just come home from and plop myself in the chair or couch - I find myself being a little more active - emm my wife - my transitions between work and home is just a step out of the door and I can monitor what’s going on in the house when there’s activity in the house. emm its a much more ----- less of a transitional because the transitional load from work was driving the car for maybe 1/2 hr 45 mins to get home - be wiped out from the drive be wiped out from work - I eat dinner - I plop myself on the couch and try to engage back again with my wife and my family - it felt much more sedentary. Then the weekend comes and I’m supposed to be this weekend warrior, and I’m gonna be all active, and get fit over the one weekend and it was just a different type of leisure. it was a different way of doing things. Now it’s a very holistic lifestyle that I’m leading as a downshifted person. So it’s hard for me to give up this for better paying money.

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Organic development: More flexibility / More spontaneous

This theme is closely allied to the previous one. With greater control of their time, work and leisure are less compartmentalized, the participants (n=7) have more flexibility with taking time for leisure and generally their experiences of leisure became more spontaneous. For example:

Mr. Dougla: So I feel a little less pressure of you know – that 8-5 8-6 job, and I have more flexibility to kinda of - in a moment if for some reason I need to do something with my family, I like the fact that I can do it.
RH: okay good - would you say the leisure activities you do at home and away from the home - have they changed in any way since you downshifted?

Mr. Dougla: emm let me think about that for a sec emmm - I mean I kinda of already mentioned - *if you consider the fact that when they used to happen - and the fact that they happen more spontaneously* - from that perspective - they’ve changed - the types of things that I do haven’t really changed –

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Ms. Ent: *I sometime will just take a day in the middle of the week off and I’ll go to the beach or something – em or I’ll decide that I want to work on Saturday because it feels like the right thing to do –

Ms. Ent: *I tend not to do the same thing at the same time every day – I don’t have a problem having meetings with people at all hours of the day or night – I’d have lunch at 4pm one day and then the next day I’ll have lunch at 11am – u know – I don’t even go for walks at the same time – so – because of my previous lifestyle that would have never been possible- everything had to be organized and scheduled*

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Mr. Irie: but weekends doesn’t really mean much – nah you wouldn’t have weekends or something – you just do it as it flows and it has a real leisure feel to it – because you don’t get into routines as such

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Conventional wisdom in the Western world holds that weekends and vacations
are usually associated with leisure (time). When discussing changes with their leisure the
participants were asked directly about both, and what if any changes they noticed. The
following themes emerged from the interviews.

**Weekends: Less work on the weekends**

I found that several participants (n=8) talked about being emancipated from work
duties during their weekends after their downshift. For example:

Mr. Callaloo: well first of all *I think I can say that the principle that characterizes my weekends now is
that I don’t work on weekends - I don’t touch my work - I do check my email, but I don’t
touch my work on weekends*

Mr. Callaloo: you know I would get - *I would get - you know people would call me on a weekend
regarding work issues ergmmm that would happen which doesn’t happen now in a
university setting* but I I can’t really - except for big projects - that demanded it, I don’t
recall many times actually working - definitely not on a Saturday - working on a
weekend.

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Mr. Maracas: a typical weekend for me either involves leaving the capital to see a new town or
spend the weekend at the beach, or to pay a visit back to the US to be free from the
aforementioned restrictions. I have been especially troubled so far by the lack of a car.
Once I receive my car in February, I should have more freedom to travel about the
country on weekends and see new things. So far, some weekends I simply stay in town and swim, read, go to dinner with friends, play dominoes, etc. I have no objection to these quiet weekends – in fact I quite enjoy them.

[AS COMPARED TO]

Mr. Maracas: I would typically go to the office one or both days for at least a few hours during the day. Friday and Saturday nights I would go out to dinner, the movies, the theater, perhaps a concert. Some Fridays I liked to stay home for some alone time. Sundays I would usually travel about the city, sometimes on foot, just to enjoy its atmosphere, with a bit of shopping once in a while.

Mrs. Tabanca: oh my god! I didn’t have weekends off – I worked almost every single Saturday for the six years that I was in law. Emm so I – I don’t ever remember having a Saturday off. Oh I actually do go to church on Sundays – I forgot about that – emm and when I was a lawyer I didn’t even have time to go church on Sundays – even though I didn’t work on Sundays, I would usually just sleep in. and emm it was really just recuperating from the week. And often it was working actually – I would bring work home on the weekends.

Weekends: freed up time because downshift facilitated the opportunity to do errands during the week.

A few participants (n=4) referred to feeling more capable of doing ‘fun’ leisurely things during their weekends after the downshift transition, because they could fit in
regular mundane time consuming chores in during the week and thus not have to do them during the weekend. For example:

Mr. Soucouyant: a lot of times too - for a break - typically I would take a break mentally - I really subscribe to the idea that its better to take a mental break than just plough through everything and be ineffective - so either at work I would take a break -go get a cup of coffee or go disturb somebody else [laughs] or make them ineffective or something - and here I fill that time with emm - you know - maybe I 'll go out to lunch and run an errand really quick, or maybe there's a fix to do in the house and I quickly do that and then I don't have to do it over the weekend - so it makes the weekend a much more enjoyable time. But don't tell my employer that [laughing].

RH: my follow up to that question is what was a typical weekend like for you prior to downshifting?
Ms. Whewhe: emm I slept in a lot and it wasn’t uncommon for me to get up about 11am on a Saturday and then it would literally be like household chores - trying to get your laundry done that you weren’t able to get done during the week - going to the grocery store - cleaning your house - emm going to the dry cleaners like those kind of errands and then maybe having a friend over for dinner and renting a movie.

RH: so you would say on the weekend now you are more out of the house since you've downshifted?
Ms. Whewhe: yes definitely

RH: more activities?
Ms. Whewhe: yes definitely

RH: okay so you feel a lot freer since you’ve downshifted especially during the week
Ms. Whewhe: yes - a just [?] and more time to get things done during the week so that your week is freer [?] things done like household chores and tings - so that when the weekend comes
you can do fun things- whereas before I was so tired during the week I didn’t do anything, so when the weekend came I had all the things around the house to do

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Vacations: Less work contact during vacation time –

Noticeable amongst several of the participants’ (n=7) accounts of their vacations prior to downshifting was the need to maintain lines of communication with their workplace during vacations. Consequently it seemed to diminish the quality of their vacations and prevented the participants from ‘escaping’. For example:

Mr. Callaloo: well I tell you now when I’m on vacation nobody really calls me - that is a huge huge difference. It also has to do with the fact that I work at a university - so in the summer there is nobody who can call because there is nobody at work anyway - but that was - I mean - when I worked in the public service which also was very challenging - I can’t forget this weekend, even when I was sick people would call - it was like you couldn’t escape it, - like you were constantly harassed - you know it wasn’t as bad on weekends as it was on vacations - vacations were the worst. I remember people calling me on vacation - I remember all the time, it didn’t matter the different hours - I was in America I was in Europe - it didn’t matter - people would call at all times - some people weren’t even aware - you know especially since roaming started on these cell phones - you know people aren’t aware that you are on the other side of the world and they'd call you constantly constantly constantly - that was something that stopped - now it doesn’t happen.

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RH: when you were on vacation as a CFO did you take your mobile phone with you a lot?

Mr. Gyul: I didn’t but I - I was basically required to check in on a daily basis - and also we usually stayed in - we go to St Bart every year - and we usually stay in a - we rent a house with a group of others every year - so there’s a telephone there and of course - you give the telephone number to your office.

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Mr. Xante: emmm it wasn’t uncommon for me to call in to see how things were going and answer any kinds of questions and kind of be on call - and now I’m not because I don’t need to be.

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Vacations: The hidden costs

One of the hidden costs of vacations is that work goes on even whilst the employee is vacationing. Several participants (n=6) found that prior to downshifting, the legwork required to get colleagues up to speed with their work to enable their break, was intense and ultimately detracted from the quality of their vacation. Similarly, on returning from a vacation, considerable hours were required to reacquaint themselves with necessary work details. For example:

Ms. Whewhe: ............... whenever I would go on vacation with the law firm - it was always - you know we had a certain amount of billable hours that we had to meet for the year - and they'd say - you know you can go on vacation as many days as you want - but you still have to
bill this many hours. So then it finally hit me - okay well you're putting us in at whatever 8.5 hours a day / 5 days a week for every month of the year - so I really don't get any time off, because even if I take that day off - you still want me to make up that 8. Or 7.5 or whatever it is - hours somewhere. And so it was almost like when you would go away you felt this stress because you knew that that week you were taking off somewhere you needed to compensate FOR IT.

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Ms. Zico: emmm and so much prep before I go, we used to joke at Microsoft that you had to work twice as hard just to get ready for a vacation, so what's the point in taking one, making sure that you've told 50 people that you work with that your gonna be gone and wrapping everything up and covering your tracks and now I have a manageable number of clients and I have a few close friends and I can let them and its very manageable.

Ms. Zico: emmm I feel completely relaxed - I don't have to keep checking email or feel stressed out that I'm missing some important meeting or I'm going to get behind - I can just relax and enjoy my time

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was that it was appreciated more; the second suggested that the attainment of increased leisure (by means of the downshift) had led to a diminished appreciation of leisure, or a de-valuation of leisure. Finally, the third perspective was that the downshift had no affect on their meaning of leisure: leisure was always and continued to be highly regarded and valued.

*Increased appreciation of leisure*

A large proportion of the participants (n=12) indicated that since their downshift they had noticed an appreciation in what leisure meant to them (associated with or partially associated with their downshift). For example:

Mr. Soucouyant: as a matter of fact I feel almost resentful when someone tries to rush me in my post downshift leisure time, because - well that’s particularly aimed at my wife who wants to fill my schedule with leisure time and then it doesn’t become leisure any more. But emmm I’m a little bit more - *I appreciate leisure time much more now - even though there might be more frequent times I really really appreciate it - I can see it for what the value is that it brings to me.*

RH: do you think your leisure has become more meaningful for you since you downshifted?

Mrs. Vaps: absolutely - I mean absolutely it’s - I mean I know how important it is to have leisure time, its – *I definitely protect that and I appreciate it and it’s an important part of my life.*
RH: do you think leisure has become more meaningful for you since you downshifted?

Ms. Whewhe: yes.

RH: why?

Ms. Whewhe: I think because I get more enjoyment out of it, and I feel that this was my emmm my attitude and just my mental well being - it just feels that I'm in a better mood and more positive and I enjoy things a lot more.

Ms. Whewhe: I would say though that the one main reason that I did decide to downshift was because I did want that balanced lifestyle. So it was a conscious choice that I did want -- I recognize the importance of leisure and I wanted more time for it. emmm so that was probably a big driving force. And I just thought that was more important to me than the money.

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**De-valuation in Leisure**

However, there were a handful of downshifters (n=5) that reflected on a common change in their perception of leisure associated with their career change. This change was that the value of leisure diminished for them. This phenomenon is similar to the less pressure/rare commodity theme identified in the changes in leisure section, only the downshift facilitated more leisure time and hence the demand for leisure diminished. For example:

Mr. Dougla: It's still as important – just not as important as before - but I definitely feel less - like I feel yeah we can go do this and it doesn’t matter if that’s the BEST thing to do or if that’s the most productive use of our time or whatever - because I feel like well we can always do something tomorrow or next week or whatever - so its more just ittt- because it
doesn’t feel like as - before it felt like this rare precious commodity and now it - I’m not saying its not valuable - I’m just saying because I have a little more freedom to do it at MY - you know when I want - it very much feels like - very much less like I have to make everything perfect

RH: do you think leisure has become more meaningful since your downshift?

Mr. Dougla: ergghhh has it become more meaningful - I’m gonna answer this kinda out of both side of my mouth - on one hand I think the very fact that I quit my job was a statement - that I was kinda reclaiming my life - emmm and so from that perspective it was almost a statement - leisure is - leisure is something that’s valuable enough that I’m willing to take the risk from a career and income perspective to recapture that in my life - so there’s that.

RH: right

Mr. Dougla: on the other side because of having done that - that any given moment since leisure is now something I can do at any time - leisure has now become something that - emm overall is a little less imp..... like - any given moment is less critical because its - I can always do it the next moment - does that make any sense?

RH: yeah - it’s more available and whereas before it was a limited resource

Mr. Dougla: yeah so from the perspective of I made a huge life-shift to re-capture my life - so from that perspective I was probably saying ahhh - I don’t know if its entirely leisure but my TIME - which leisure is a component of was so important that I was willing to make a dramatic shift in my career and things like that and because of that I have more access to leisure but that also means that because leisure is no longer as finite a commodity in any given moment it may not be as important as it was before. If that makes sense?

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Mr. Gyul: because in a way it was more meaningful when I was working because it was - it was more RARE and it had to be planned - so it was - I don’t know if meaningful is the right word but it was more emmm ---- it was more emmm - I probably appreciated it more when I was working - because it was such a scarce - it was a scarcer resource

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RH: just in general now, are there any differences in the way you experience leisure now as compared to before you downshifted?

Mr. Naranga: emmmmm….. I would say it’s not as important now.

RH: leisure?

Mr. Naranga: yeah it’s kinda weird – like when I was an engineer it was incredibly important. Like I thought it was like the key to my sanity … in a way [laughs] emmm and I would feel - …..I was one of those people and you would meet them and you would say – oh I haven’t worked out for 4 days and I feel bad – or – u know I haven’t done XYZ for a couple of days, all I feel I’m doing is working – and that was really effecting me. And now I kinda leisure view leisure as almost - …. You know I think its great and all, but I feel like I have almost too much of it. And I think part of that is my engineering mind, because there are times that I kind of shake myself and say okay – You know you could be one of the most fortunate people around. you have like complete freedom and so it’s kinda weird. That’s probably been the biggest adjustment for me, because having spent so much time in school towards one goal and then to completely shift to this other thing – you know I’m still kinda justifying it in my mind – like u know shouldn’t I be doing something on a Tuesday – kinda thing [laughs]

Mr. Naranga: no, I think its definitely less – definitely less- because ehhhh as I said when I was an engineer I really – I really –it was funny like when I was an engineer I really treasured the time that I had off – like I really thought this is you know .... almost to the point that
if things cancelled, or if things didn’t work out I was really disappointed about it. And now I’ve kinda gone to the opposite, its like u know when things that aren’t free time get cancelled, I’m kinda like oh here’s more free time [laughs] but then at the same time I do have to say that u know, the time that I spend leisurely with my wife and stuff I really enjoy that. Like I like the freedom that – that – now we’ve structured our schedules that when we know some bad weather is coming and if there’s no way that I’m going to teach on a Tuesday – she takes the time off and we get to spend that time together. That’s pretty nice. You know – that’s been kinda – I don’t know – I would say it’s definitely lost some of its importance to me.

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Meaning of leisure remained the same

A couple of participants (n=2) maintained that the meaning of leisure had not changed for them, it has always been and continues to be very important to them, and the only change is that the downshift has facilitated increased availability of leisure time. For example:

Mr. Maracas: I don’t know exactly what this question means, but I think the answer is “no.” Leisure has always been extremely important to me, because it is the time that I control for my own purposes. Its importance hasn’t changed, but I’ve changed my life to permit myself more of it.

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RH: has leisure become more meaningful for you since you downshifted?
Mr. Jouvert: *No I think it always was. I mean it is VERY meaningful, it is very meaningful indeed and I don’t think it’s……u know its like the [anecdotal?] life isn’t worth living and I think life without leisure isn’t worth living either.*

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**Were the changes evident in leisure directly attributable to the downshift?**

Whilst the downshift career change was considered an important element for many of the changes that the participants experienced in and with their leisure, many of the participants (n=10) explicitly said that the changes could be attributed to ‘other’ things as well as their career change. The following quotes provide evidence that these ‘other’ things generally consisted of family changes (having children, or transitions in their children lives), geographical changes, and changes in personal circumstances (getting married or divorced).

Mr. Jouvert: *well there are lots of other parameters – 10 years ago I wasn’t married – ehhh so I spent a lot of time looking for the next woman, so I would go ….so I’d spend my Saturday evenings doing West Coast swing dancing, which I’d taken 10 years of lessons for, that was one of the things I did – and I’d occasionally go out on dates at the weekend, but I was single then*

Mr. Jouvert: *It’s hard to sort of define the weekends differently because of ONE change really.*

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Ms. Kaiser: okay so like tennis, walking, riding my bike, I used to roller blade in Boston, but not much here. *Cause in Boston it was great to blade down by the river. But that’s more geographical not downshift related*

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Mrs. Razzam: *emmmm I just think the reality of it is – that I went out a lot more -*

RH: *was that because you were in the city?*

Mrs. Razzam: *yeaahhh it was a city and it was mostly being single – and u know so it’s downshifting but it also corresponds to a lot of other things obviously*

Mrs. Razzam: *yeaahhh - I mean I’m sure people have downshifted in all kinds of different scenarios – I mean I dunno if this is a pretty typical one – *but I can imagine there are certain – probably punctuations in peoples life where they make transitions like this – u know cause they had kids or whether its because they want to go down their career or whether there is somebody that’s like me whose u know – paired up and had a number of things change. Maybe there is people that downshift just out of the blue – which I was looking for but I just couldn’t - u know - justify it right out [laughs]. Like it – had I not though met my husband and had a successful relationship and decided to get married I probably would have made the choice myself in a year or two.*

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Mrs. Unitas: *Well now that we have a 4 yr old, we used to do things like skiing and running and all kinds of stuff like that - we do less of that - we do more of going to the science center-going to the museums - going swimming - we go swimming a lot - you know where there’s kid friendly things*
Ms. Zico:  I did go thru a divorce right after I left my job, and so my life has really -- you know
some of this it’s a little hard to attribute to the downshifting solely –

Ms. Zico:  I think again I’m really conscious in making choices I really appreciate I have this time
and I’m .... I feel wiser now, I mean some of that too is post divorce - approaching 40 but
I’m really choosing things that are more meaningful for me

Are leisure experiences more or less social since the downshift?

I asked my participants directly about the ‘socialness’ of their leisure and whether they had noticed a change in it since their downshift. More participants (n=11) responded that their leisure had actually become less social, compared to those that thought they had become more social (n=7). The interpretation behind this phenomenon is addressed in the discussion chapter. Presented here are the interview snippets from (a) those participants that believed their leisure has transformed more socially and (b) vice versa, those participants that believe their leisure is less social following their downshift, and (c) those participants that don’t believe there is any change in the social nature of their leisure.
**Downshifters who recognized they are more social**

Ms. Pelau: *I bought a house after I quit my job and I - for the first time living in San Fran I know all my neighbors and it’s just really nice - I get to go to the market across the street and just hang out*

RH: do you think in your post downshift leisure - that it is more socially orientated?

Ms. Pelau: *oh yeah definitely - I mean its - I felt like before - and its gonna sound really awful but I didn’t have time to be friendly to people - you know like I was on a mission -so I had to get something done and small talk was just getting in the way and - I’m definitely much friendlier and I more of a relaxed person now.*

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RH: do you think your post-downshift leisure is more socially orientated?

Mr. Soucouyant: *yeah definitely - I really appreciate meeting new people whereas before I wanted to get away from people - I wanted more solitude because I didn’t get any in my pre-downshifting mode - because I was inundated with people pulling at me. Now I’m a little bit more open to learning about new people and I really enjoy people. As a matter of fact a good example is Roulon, when I met Stef on the plane I was the talkative one and I know she was a little leery but I kinda found myself enjoying meeting new people*

Mr. Soucouyant: *[Before] yeah I might have been a little more reserved and guarded and you know - I would have probably found the time on the plane as my - get away from everything - I don’t need to talk to anybody - because this is my time. I was a little bit more possessive of my time*

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Ms. Zico: I felt pretty disconnected with friends other than friends at work. I didn’t have lots of time for phone calls with them, it always felt pretty squeezed in - as a matter of fact there were many people that would be mad with me because I would pop off quick emails in between meetings at Microsoft and people would be offended - even my family - gosh we just get these one sentence emails from you, or you hurt my feelings with this quick point that you made, I don’t get that. So now that NEVER happens - I have plenty of time for context and time for connecting.

Ms. Zico: so I make a lot more time now for informational interviews or if people want my advice on things I can meet people for tea and chat with them, whereas in my Microsoft life it still was important to me but I felt so busy, I was always canceling people and asking for rain checks and just couldn’t commit to too much of that. I feel I have again much deeper connections to people than I used to have.

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Downshifters who recognized they are less social

Mr. Naranga: emmmm… yeah well its funny because now my leisure time is not dominated by like playing sports and going out with my friends – now my leisure time has become more individual – because when I was working all the time, my leisure time would be to catch up with – because I didn’t really work with any of my friends – so it would be to catch up with my friends and u know hang out with my fiancé or girlfriend or whatever it was at the time – and now my leisure time is okay I’ll read books or I’ll relax by myself or I’ll u know…. Plan out my day so that when I have time off to do whatever it is I need to want to do – emmm so I guess if leisure, however you define it, its definitely……its almost too relaxed. Its make me feel like I’m [laughs] removing myself from society sometimes. – it’s kinda strange.
Mr. Naranga: I would say the stuff outside the home hasn’t changed much from when I was doing engineering, but the stuff inside the home definitely has – like the stuff I put on the questionnaire *my leisure time when I was an engineer almost always involved someone else* – and now it’s pretty much me.

RH: very solitary

Mr. Naranga: *pretty solitary yeah, which is also strange because now I spend, my work as an engineer was fairly solitary and now my work is always interacting with people.*

RH: almost a complete switch around there

Mr. Naranga: yeah I know, and when I was really busy in tennis I kinda liked it – because it was kinda challenging to manage all those personalities but – emmm u know sometimes – for me its its – it’s the consistency of it, like if I have too many bad lessons in a row – you feel like it kinda sucks [laughs] and then if u have a bad lesson, then a good lesson with someone u like and a bad lesson – it can kinda even itself out.

Mr. Naranga: yes, it’s definitely less socially orientated, it’s definitely more individually pleasing, like if I do something leisurely it’ll be ME watching a movie because that’s what I want to do. And then in a way its been good because if - I guess I get to explore what I really want to do – like if I want to read a certain book its no big deal – because u know – its just gong to be me.

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Mrs. Tabanca: so I love to ride my bike during this season – the winter season- that’s the best time to ride – emm but that’s probably one of my favorite things to do – and one of the reasons I like it unfortunately is because it’s a solitary event – I don’t have to rely on anyone else –
whereas to play things like tennis etc you have to rely on someone but with the cycling I can just go by myself

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**Downshifters who recognized no change in their ‘socialness’**

A few downshifters (n=4) indicated that there was no change in how social their leisure was.

RH: okay – do you think your post-downshift leisure is more socially orientated?

Ms. Ent: emm nooo I don’t think so – *I think it’s probably pretty much the same still. While I enjoy working with people I am still more of an introvert and I NEED my personal time with myself – to recharge my batteries – I get fatigued if I’m always around other people. I hold up really well and I don’t mind the social aspect of it – but that is not energizing for me – that’s more tiring as compared to (?) to just have some time with myself.*

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Mr. Gyul: emmm *you know I wouldn’t say that it’s changed much - that it’s more or less socially orientated than before.*

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Are leisure experiences more or less community orientated since the downshift?

The participants were asked directly whether they believed if they’re community involvement had increased after changing careers. The evidence from the database indicates that community involvement changed both ways, that is, the majority of the participants (n=12) believed they became more involved following their downshift, and a smaller group of participants (n=7) believed the opposite, that they were less involved with their communities following their downshift. The following extracts demonstrate this spectrum of opinions.

More community involvement after downshifting

Mrs. Aguchi: and when I got home it was usually 7pm – sometimes later and you know – it was eat some food eghhhh do some dishes get the clothes ready for the next day and fall into bed – u know I didn’t do anything in my community, emmm I’m involved in local politics now and I didn’t do that before I downshifted – emmm I didn’t know anyone – I didn’t see anyone – emmm I had u know - very little life

Mrs. Aguchi: when I get to be involved in my community that’s really fun – I ran for office – what is it now – 2 years ago – in 2004 – 3 years ago now – I ran for the state legislature and I enjoyed everything about it except the actual losing – which was really painful but you get over that – you meet so many wonderful people who care so much about the health of their communities and its … you learn SO much

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RH: do you think your post-downshift leisure is more community orientated?
Ms. Ent: *absolutely – I’ve had much more time to do community service related things – like I said
I’ve done a LOT of pro-bono work with non profits and so fourth.*

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Ms. Pelau: *- I bought a house after I quit my job and I - for the first time living in San Fran I know
all my neighbors and it’s just really nice - I get to go to the market across the street and
just hang out*

RH: okay in terms of community - do you feel a lot stronger bond with the community now?

Ms. Pelau: *yeah and part of that comes from owning a home here - but definitely its nice to - like I
said I’ve gotten to know my neighbors for the first time since living in San Fran and I
volunteer in with all kinds of neighborhood organizations now - partly because I have
more time but also partly because I feel more vested in the neighborhood more.*

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Ms. Zico: *yes I’m definitely connected with my community more with neighbors, with volunteering
and definitely more --its interesting though, in some ways I was more social at Microsoft,
because I had to go to an office, so beginning at 9am there were lots of people and there
were people to talk to and people [??] a lot in my team everyone kinda closed their door
and it was - everyone was trying to be very busy and working but I forced it by having
lunch with friends and kinda of tried to make sure that it was there. Now in someways I
have more quiet time and time alone, but the social times are more quality, they may be
of more [?] a little less and more quality time.*

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Less community involvement after downshifting

RH: okay – how about if you’re post-downshift leisure life is more community orientated?

Mr. Jouvert:  

no I don’t think it is. I think the sort of postmodern ehhh postmodernism is that you get to choose everything that you’re interested in and it can make you LESS ehhh socially orientated and I –I ……… I …….. you know I can’t speak for anyone else obviously - I find that more artistic, sort of creative natures [describing himself here] tend to be more internally driven I guess. Like I would certainly like to have more contact with people, but frankly I don’t find that many people stimulating that I come across.

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RH: do you think your post-downshift leisure life is more community orientated?

Mr. Limer:  

no. no.

RH: why’s that?

Mr. Limer:  
ahhhh that’s an ironic thing because that’s one of the reasons that I came out of corporate or whatever to be more involved with community. But, u know, there is so much ……. there is so little pay off of being anything else outside of your work that you slowly say – ok I’m just going to write 2 papers and forget about it and just go and sit and watch football and just go and mow the yard or something – that’s it.

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Mr. Maracas:  

No. The eccentric nature of my current existence doesn’t really permit me to be in contact with much of a larger “community.”

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Volunteering

Community is quite a subjective expression, and when the participants were asked about something a little more concrete – ‘volunteering in the community’— the responses indicated that the participants did not show a high propensity to start volunteering in their communities after downshifting if they were not prone to volunteering before. The exception to this were three male family orientated downshifters (Dougla, Soucouyant, and Callaloo) who all indicated that they were more likely to volunteer for church projects that they would not have done in the past. The participants (n=5) that discussed their volunteer work indicated that they were just as likely to volunteer in their communities before downshifting. In addition, these participants indicated that their volunteering experiences were more genuine after the career change. For example:

RH: okay and those activities – were you doing the mentoring before you downshifted as well?

Ms. Ent: no actually I was doing quite a bit of mentoring before too – I've always been interested in that – but the difference again being that when I was doing it previously it was more of a chore

Ms. Whewhe: emmm no I think right now, what I do in my free time, I’m probably more - not more - I would say I’m less selfish because I’ve become a lot more involved with volunteer activities. Whereas probably before if I had free time, it was going to be something for just me. Whereas now, you know if I think, ohh its 2 hours after work for meeting with the Red Cross - No Problem and like I know even in my other job, they would encourage us to get out and get involved in the community to bring in new clients and so I almost felt - I got on the board of the YMCA and I felt like it was forced and they would make
us go to these [shamer??] commerce meetings where I did not want to be there, but it was just to be there to drum up business.

RH: right

Ms. Whewhe: and I stayed on the board at the Y, after I left the firm, but it was much more enjoyable because it felt like I was there because I wanted to be there, it wasn’t this purpose that I had to be there trying to drum up clients. emmm so I would say now that I’m probably less selfish with the types of activities that I do

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Ms. Whewhe: I now do a lot of volunteer work and I fit that into my days. I’m on a board and I’m committed to that,

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Has leisure been used for more personal development more since the downshift?

The downshifters who participated in this study certainly expressed a consensus opinion that with more control over their time they intended to and had already invested it in their personal development. Several downshifters (n=12) recognized the gifted opportunity their downshift had opened up for them to develop their long term personal goals. For example:

RH: do you think your post downshift leisure is more geared towards personal development?

Mr. Soucouyant: yes definitely - I’m equating lot more with leisure time not just a get away or escape - its more of - how can it better me and the people around me
RH: do you feel like your post downshift leisure is geared more towards personal development than what it was before?

Ms. Whewhe: I would say ---- yes, because I think that - emm -- its easy - its always - sometimes I get uncomfortable walking into a room full of people that I don’t know and I’m not very outgoing and so typically I would talk to ONLY the people that I knew at functions and not really wonder off. And now I think I try to make more of an effort to go up and introduce myself to people --- or just kinda go out of your comfort zone. emm so I think in that area I’ve worked on personal development. and I think too - just exposing myself to some different activities that I may not have done before.

MS. Yuhtink: yes – this is just about being me – it’s ALL about personal development – because it’s not just an activity – it’s like how do I want to BE in the world

Ms. Ent is a good example of a participant who did not consider her desire to use leisure for personal development a new idea evolved from her downshift however. Only previously, work commitments prevented her from pursuing her personal development.

RH: do you think your post-downshift leisure is more geared towards personal development than it was before?

Ms. Ent: I think I have always been working on personal development – that has always been extremely important to me- but what has happened over time – is obviously having more time – even being able to take a year a half to explore what matters most to me and why –
that’s something that previously I would have never been able to imagine doing. So yes there’s been much more time for personal development – even though it’s been as important to me as before I downshifted as it is now – I think my perception was just different

RH: okay and finally is there anything else that you think is important for me to understand the role of balance in your life and how it changed with your downshift?

Ms. Ent: well one of the other things that I think happened over time – and I don’t know if it’s a direct result of the downshifting or -- .... I’m not really quite sure where to put this. But something that seems important to mention – is that – at some point a shift took place for me where I realized I …..had ownership of my personal development – and that I didn’t have to take another class – even though I do take lots of workshops and classes – and in having said that I just finished the teacher training course. I – I have begun to feel a lot more – of a sense of confidence that – I know what I need to do to continue to further my personal growth and I don’t need anyone to tell me how to do it, or what to do and I don’t need to read a book on it, I know what to do and… I guess what is making me want to say that is – having reached a place where I was more aware and in balance of myself or perhaps more connected to myself – that I just allowed these experiences -- when an opportunity presented itself – that I allowed myself to pursue those experiences – which almost took me on a year ½ long series of fieldtrips around the planet.

Ms. Ent: so I don’t really know quite how to articulate this but I – I guess what I’m trying to say is that - - I feel more of a sense of ownership over my emm personal growth and development now than I used to feel. I used to feel that I had to go outside to learn how to do that and now I think I have it inside of me and I know what to do - if I need to work on it.

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Has leisure become less consumption orientated social since the downshift?

Another element to downshifting in addition to reducing work hours is to reduce consumption (in particular of material goods). This aspect of spending less was not prevalent across my study group. However, a couple of participants (n=2) did suggest their consumer behavior had changed with their downshift. For example:

Ms. Ent:  
I also sometimes think about how extravagant I was in the past solving problems or just indulging in something because I was so stressed

RH:  yeah

Ms. Ent:  I – I – I don’t do that – I don’t do that now. I – while I probably still have way more things than I need – I – I don’t rely on things in the same way that maybe I relied upon or used them in the past. I – there are just sometimes where – when I was just really frazzled and I had multiple business trips and projects and everything was just flying around fast and furiously I would spend ridiculous amounts of money to solve problems for myself in those situations and sometimes I would just splurge and buy crazy stuff because I was stressed and at the time it made me feel better to do that. I DEFINITELY don’t do that now – and it’s not even a question of not feeling like I can afford it, I don’t feel that way. I just realize that THAT [the buying and owning of things] is not important at all.

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RH:  since your downshift - how has your consumption of leisure services and goods changed?

Mr. Soucouyant:  ehhhhh -how’s it changed? I’m not buying any more clothes necessarily. maybe on the clothes side I wear a little more casual clothes - I’m not buying suits as much as I used to - so emm Armani not’s getting the money I used to give him. I can't really put my finger on it - I know there’s a little bit of a shift - but the goods and services - I think I’m more
prone to buy the services of the something like yoga now, and some vacation spots that I otherwise would have been a little more uptight to purchase. that might be

RH: that sounds like more experiential things than material things?

Mr. Soucouyant: yeah definitely - material things - I don’t think anything has changed materially emm I think - I don’t think there is as much change as - maybe I’m not exposed as much to the peer pressure in an office - like john or bill whose just bought a new car or something and then I feel the need to buy one - and now I’m kinda like a little bit more happier with what I have.

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However, there were opinions expressed by several participants (n=6) that were quite contrary to frugal consumerism. For example:

RH: since your downshift how has your consumption of leisure services and goods changed?

Mr. Gyul: emmm I've probably purchased more leisure goods - as a matter of fact I know I have - oh I forgot to mention one other thing - I do go occasionally on wilderness river adventures - out west - and I did that this past May - again something that I did do once or twice when I was working but emm again it was the whole stress - that planning element that - it was SO nice to be able to do it this year - and decide on my own that yeah this is what I want to be able to do. So eggh yeah I’ve been doing more leisure and I’ve - as a result I've bought more golf clubs and more tennis racquets and more emm sports apparel than I did before when I was working.

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Mrs. Unitas: now - I think we have probably spent close to $20k a year on vacations and skiing and things like that - emmm we're going to go to Hawaii in Feb for ten days - we'll take our kids skiing for five days - you know where we used to spend that money more on like material things - and we still do but so much of what we pay for and what we save for is vacation.

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It was also evident that several of the participants (n=4) in this study were in considerably advantageous financial positions, which no doubt significantly changes the nature of the decision of whether or not to be frugal. For example:

Mr. Gyul: I don’t have to worry about income at least for the next year or so. That’s basically what I got - was sorta of a year's severance - maybe a little bit more - emmm and some additional stock options

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Ms. Pelau: Basically I had plenty money saved up so I just quit. and erhh I had known even when I took the job that it wasn’t it wasn’t my dream job, because I was trained to be a lawyer and it was a great opportunity to earn a lot of money, so I did it and basically waited for the right time and just quit

Ms. Pelau: I just was feeling this is my life passing by and what am I doing this for - and emmm I think I mentioned in the questionnaire that I worked for a company that did very well and so I had stock options that were worth a lot of money and it was sort of like - there’s just really no point for me to do this - I don’t - I really liked the people that I worked with - I
I miss the interaction with them, I miss the sense of getting a lot done every day - so I don’t get as much done every day as I did then - and I had a very simple erggh you know there weren’t a lot of variable going on, like I didn’t have the dog, I had a tiny apartment, it was sorta - there was sort of like a sense of control in that way, but it really just felt like - am I going to do this every day for the rest of my life - this is really miserable way to live a life and so I started to hate everything about the job

Ms. Pelau: So - I feel very lucky that I have this ability to do an hour job that pays well and then my expenses have gone down -

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Mrs. Razzam: Well I think – for me the ‘burb’ feels extremely orderly and it also feels like u know – I mean I happened to live in a very privileged area to, so it doesn’t feel like reality to me. Emm and so there is you know – it does feel more real somehow you know

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Summary

The themes that emerged from the data analysis depicting the meanings of leisure for the participants, and the changes they experienced in their leisure following their downshift are summarized in the following tables 8 and 9. The analysis did not extend to looking for interactions between the themes, it merely endeavored to identify common ideas pertinent to answering the research questions among the participants interviews. Therefore no attempt should be made to decipher inter-theme relationships from the tables.

Table 8: Meanings of Leisure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fun / enjoyment</th>
<th>Relaxation</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Traveling</th>
<th>Creative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Doing nothing / hanging</td>
<td>Absence of</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing sports / projects</td>
<td>out / watching TV</td>
<td>work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceived freedom

Self choice / Do what I want to do / Free time / No obligation / No productive purpose / Frivolous
Table 9: Changes in Leisure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More active / more energy</th>
<th>No change just more of it</th>
<th>Change in perceived leisure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Organic lifestyle development**
- Balance / Work = leisure / More flexible / spontaneous / Fit work around leisure /
- Integrated or holistic

**Less pressure**
- Less pressure to have fun / No longer a rare commodity / Time is less compressed /
- More relaxed or less rushed / Less intense / Less peer pressure / Less pressure to make it big or unusual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekends</th>
<th>Vacations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No more Sunday night dread / Less work</td>
<td>Less work / Hidden costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For visual effect I chose to assemble the themes together in a concept map, this helped assimilate the labels and themes and get an overall big picture. The benefit of this technique is that it enables complicated ideas to be visualized in a non-linear fashion, and with its focus on using key words it aids the data reduction and labeling processes (Svantesson & Svantesson, 1990).

Figures 1 and 2 are examples of the concept maps that I constructed to assist my analysis. My hand-drawn concept maps were enhanced by using a trial version of the iMindmap Buzan software [iMindMap™ version 2.0.2 (5)].
Figure 1: Conceptual map 1- Meanings of Leisure for downshifters
Figure 2: Conceptual map 2 – Changes in downshifters leisure
Meanings of leisure that emerged from this study for downshifters included leisure as: some form of *perceived freedom*, be it *self choice, free time, lack of obligation; relaxation, or a way to alleviate stress; fun and enjoyment; balance; absence of work; traveling; doing nothing, watching TV or hanging out; being creative; doing an activity such as sports or projects; and family time*. Labels chosen for the analysis were generally not based on frequency of occurrence within the data; they were selected using the constant comparative method. However, the labels that appeared most commonly in the data set for meanings of leisure were: free time, fun /enjoyment, family, relaxation and self choice.

There did appear to be significant changes in several of the participants’ leisure. One such change was an *organic lifestyle development*, where the relationship between work and leisure was affected. In some situations the participants (n=7) work morphed into their leisure, for others (n=4) they found after their downshift that they could *fit work around leisure* (rather than vice versa). Some participants (n=7) found that they had much *greater flexibility* of when they chose to leisure and their general leisure experiences are *more spontaneous*. Several participants (n=8) talked about living an *integrated or holistic lifestyle*, such as *not differentiating between weekends and weekdays*. For instance working over the weekend and going to the beach during the week. Mr. Soucouyant explicitly said he felt his leisure was more holistic after his downshift and that he was no longer condemned to compressing all his leisure and exercise into the weekend as a notorious ‘weekend warrior’. A ‘natural’ theme emerged that I assigned a *biological label*, whereby participants (n=4) made reference to the changes in their leisure in terms
of their bodies or some connection with nature. Finally an element of balance pervaded throughout the organic lifestyle development theme, emphasizing the downshift resulted in a more balanced lifestyle.

*Less pressure* was a collection of labels that encapsulated a noticeable change amongst the participants. Downshifting was a catalyst for the participants (n=9) to feel *more relaxed* and *less rushed* about their leisure, consequently enjoying it more. For several participants (n=6) leisure prior to their downshift was a *rare commodity* that often forced them to try and make their leisure experiences *special, big or unusual* (n=8). Being able to experience leisure in a *less compressed format* enabled many participants (n=8) to recapture their weekends from work. The desire to make leisure experiences *intense* was diminished, with several participants (n=5) indicating that they’ve lost the ‘work hard, play hard’ ethic and now tend to be more relaxed and not quite so intense with their leisure. Another label that was included in the less pressure theme was *less pressure in general to have fun* (n=5).

Several participants (n=9) talked about changes in their leisure as if there were no changes, it was just that they could experience more leisure. *No change just more of it* was the theme that captured this sentiment.

Closely allied to the ‘no change just more of it’ label was the *change in perceived leisure* (n=5) label. It could be argued that these two labels are the same thing, except the change in perception label described the situation where participants believed they literally had *no* leisure prior to downshifting, and post-downshift they feel like leisure re-entered their lives. Whereas, the ‘no change just more of it’ label depicts a situation
where the participant experienced (or perceived to experience) leisure prior to downshifting, and post-downshift they just experience better quality and more quantity of leisure.

A result with important implications (especially in our increasing sedentary workplaces) was captured with the more energy / more active theme. Several participants (n=13) expressed feeling more energized and more active since downshifting.

Areas commonly associated with leisure: weekends and vacations were effected by career downshifts. Several participants (n=8) reported working less on the weekend, and linked to the less pressure and organic themes, several participants (n=4) indicated that because of the flexibility in their new careers they were able to fit errands in during the week that would have normally clogged up their weekends, thus leading to more enjoyable stress reduced weekends.

Vacations were also reported to be freed from the overbearing constraints of demanding careers by downshifting. The changes were experienced in two ways; the first was simply less contact with work whilst away on vacation (n=7). The second was a break from the hidden costs of vacations (n=6), namely careers before downshifting entailed excessive preparation before leaving for vacations and intensive catch-up returning to work after vacations.

Evidence in the database supported dichotomous changes in the meanings of leisure for downshifters. Leisure appreciated in value for many participants (n=12), whereas the converse was true for a smaller number, with leisure depreciating in value for this smaller group of downshifters (n=5). There were also a couple of participants that
expressed no change in their meaning of leisure associated with their career change (n=2).

The current study’s endeavor to shed light on Juniu’s (2000) speculation that downshifting can help regain the essence of leisure, produced a mixed evaluation. In terms of one’s leisure being more social, there were more participants (n=11) that believed their leisure was less social after their downshift, as compared to those (n=7) that considered their leisure to be more socially centered. This contradicted Juniu’s conjecture, however this finding is conditional, because some of the participants (n=7) who considered their leisure to be less social had actually downshifted into careers that provided considerably more social contact than they had previously.

Community wise, there were more participants (12) in this study that believed their downshift had increased their community involvement as compared to those that considered their community involvement to diminish (n=7). Interestingly, those participants that indicated they were less involved in their community were all males. The males who increased their community involvement were all family men and referred to helping out with church projects as their involvement. The female downshifters community involvement was more varied ranging from helping out in church, tutoring kids from inner cities, sitting on boards of community organizations and even running for office in local elections.

The effect of downshifting on this study’s participants’ propensity to volunteer appeared minimal. Apart from the male participants (n=3) mentioned above in community involvement, which helped out with their churches, the participants who
directly referred to volunteering were as apt to volunteer before downshifting as they were after. However, there was a change recognized in the volunteer experience subsequent to downshifting; their volunteering appeared to be more genuine or of a higher quality.

When discussing personal development, there seemed to be consensus amongst this study’s participants (n=12) that leisure was devoted more towards personal development subsequent to downshifting than it was before. Several participants (n=4) made reference to using the increased leisure time to pursuing lifelong goals.

There was little evidence to suggest that leisure had transformed in nature from its modern day consumption orientated experience for this sample of downshifters. Only a couple of participants (n=2) indicated that they were less likely to splurge on leisure goods, but several others (n=6) indicated that subsequent to their downshift their leisure spending had actually increased.

Finally, the participants generally agreed that the downshift was instrumental in the changes that they had experienced in their leisure and meanings of leisure. However, several participants (n=10) believed that these changes were not solely derived from their downshift. These ‘other’ factors that catalyzed leisure changes were; family changes (n=4), such as children growing up and needing supervision to and from various extra curricular activities; geographical or environmental issues (n=2), for instance, if a participant’s new career relocated him or her to a new location perhaps he or she was prevented from participating in his/her favorite pastime because of environmental constraints or just the fact that the activity was not available in that location; and changes
in personal circumstances (n=4), either getting married or divorced was cited as having direct effects on the changes in leisure.

In the following chapter these results are discussed with reference to the literature, the contributions this study makes to the field of leisure studies and the downshifting knowledge base. Study limitations and implications from this research for potential future research are also addressed.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The purposes of this study were to develop a comprehensive understanding of the meanings of leisure specifically for downshifters, understand what types of transformations occur in their leisure and to gauge if their meanings of leisure changed after they downshifted. Across the sample of downshifters studied, it was established that leisure experiences and meanings generally do tend to change and I therefore also endeavored to (i) relate those changes with the downshifting career change itself, and (ii) investigate if the changes represented a regaining of the essence of leisure. Whereby, Juniu (2000) postulated that regaining the ‘essence of leisure’ could be recognized by leisure that is more centered on the social life (as opposed to individually focused), and leisure that is used more for personal growth and contemplation rather than merely mindless consumption (Juniu, 2000).

Meanings attached to leisure for downshifters that emerged from this study included leisure as: some form of perceived freedom, (one or more of self choice, free time, lack of obligation); relaxation, or a way to alleviate stress; fun and enjoyment; balance; absence of work; traveling; doing nothing, watching TV or hanging out; being creative; doing an activity such as sports or projects; and family time or doing things with the family.

The study’s dataset contained evidence to show changes in leisure (in some form or another) occurred for all the participants interviewed, following their career change
downshift. No hierarchy of the changes was established, some participants talked about experiencing several changes, others may have only experienced only one. The data was not mined to determine a logical ordering in which participants would experience the changes.

One transformation in leisure experience was an *organic lifestyle development*, where the participants expressed lifestyle changes which affected how they experienced their work and leisure. Signified, for instance, by less compartmentalization of time allocated between work and leisure, work becoming more like leisure in nature, and an overall integrated well balanced lifestyle. *Less pressure* was a theme amalgamating labels that depicted another noticeable change amongst the participants’ leisure; it revolved around different factors that ultimately reduced the pressure to enjoy leisure. Two allied themes emerged loosely connected by the notion of perception. One theme entailed the participants perceiving there was *no change in their leisure just more of it*, and the second was a complete change in the participants’ perceived leisure, from having none before downshifting to actually having leisure after their downshift. Numerous participants (n=13) during the interviews expressed feeling more energy and/or being more active following their downshift. This has important implications for health benefits from leisure. Traditional time domains associated with leisure, weekends and vacations, were also transformed post-downshift. Generally both were freer, interrupted less by work and enjoyed more. There were exceptions; some participants (n=5) did work on the weekends, but generally because they’d had a fair share of leisure during the week.
Interpreting meaning of leisure in terms of value or importance that participants assigned it, there was little evidence to support definitive changes in the meanings of leisure in one direction. That is, post-downshift, some participants (n=12) from the study became more appreciative of their leisure, whereas others (n=5) experienced the reverse, with their leisure actually depreciating in value. There were a couple of participants (n=2) who expressed no perceived change in their personal meaning of leisure after their downshift.

The results of the current study do provide insight into deciding whether or not downshifting is a catalyst to regain the essence of leisure. One tell-tale sign indicating whether the essence of leisure has been regained is leisure that is more socially centered (Juniu, 2000). The socialness of leisure post-downshift of the participants studied, appeared to be dictated by the nature of their new careers more than anything else. Some participants (n=7) expressed experiencing leisure in more socially centered environments, but more (n=11) indicated that now they experience leisure on a more individual, less social basis.

Another tell-tale sign of leisure experiences that signify regaining the essence of leisure is a greater connection to the community (Juniu, 2000). There was general consensus amongst the study’s female participants (n=9) that they felt a stronger connection with their communities in their post-downshift lives. The males (n=7) generally did not feel this increased connection, albeit for a few male church volunteers (n=3).
Juniu’s (2000) vision of the essence of leisure being regained with leisure that is more devoted to personal development was supported by the dataset. A high proportion of the downshifters (n=12) indicated that post-downshift, their leisure was more likely to be devoted to areas of personal development. For some (n=4) this was not new, using their increased freedom to pursue lifelong goals, whereas others (n=8) felt a transformation in using leisure progressively rather than just frittering it away and escaping work.

The post modern consumer culture model of leisure which fosters commodification and consumerism of leisure, (Juniu, 2000; Hemingway, 1996) does not look to be significantly effected by downshifting. There was little evidence to suggest that leisure had transformed from the model of mass consumption and consumerism for this sample of downshifters after their career changes. A few participants (n=2) did significantly reduce their spending on leisure services and goods, several others (n=6) actually increased their leisure expenditures, and the majority (19) said there was little or no change in their leisure expenditures.

Thus, the results from this sample of downshifters are rather mixed with regards to the answering the question of whether downshifting is a strong catalyst for regaining the essence of leisure. This will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Finally, whether the essence of leisure was regained or not, the participants generally agreed that their downshift career changes played a part in the changes that were experienced in their leisure. However, there was also general recognition that it was only one component of the catalyst for change. Other significant factors identified were:
changes in personal circumstances (n=4) (such as marriage or divorce), family changes (kids growing up) (n=4), and geographical changes (n=2) (certain types of leisure no longer available in relocated areas).

MEANINGS OF LEISURE

When reviewing the meanings of leisure that emerged for the participants of this study, the first thing that became apparent is that downshifters’ constructions or perceptions of leisure are similar to those of conventional meanings of leisure and contain most of the same associations as identified in the leisure studies literature.

The element that was not reported as a main theme in my results was social interaction. This is however not to say that my participants were an anti-social group. Several of them did actually discuss how their downshift enabled them to be more social, but, in defining leisure, very few of them actually referred to social interactions and that was why this element was not included in the meanings of leisure results of this study.

The core source for answers as to what leisure means to my participants, was developed by asking them “how they define leisure?” and “what was the role of leisure in their lives?” Several other questions, aimed to glean meanings from ‘typical’ weekday or weekend rituals were also asked. Therefore the results in this study should reflect meanings of leisure from both perspectives (frequency and importance), however, it is likely, the themes that emerged are more of a reflection of what the participants considered most important rather than what they do most frequently in or with their leisure.
In her study to clarify conceptualizations of leisure, Shaw (1985) indicated that previous research that was based on asking participants to define leisure produced common themes such as pleasure, relaxation, the absence of obligations, and the absence of pressures. However, she questioned the reliability of these findings because it was not clear whether the individuals provided personal definitions or perceived societal definitions (Shaw, 1985). It could be argued that the themes developed for meanings of leisure for this study may be suspect to the same weakness, since my participants were asked to define leisure. Were they giving me their personal definition or what they considered to be a societal “norm” definition? By asking questions that probed deeper beyond a mere definition, contextualizing situations that allowed them to talk about the role of leisure in their lives and actual leisure experiences I believe that my themes did capture authentic personal definitions. The following interaction between Mr. Hasecara and myself is an example of me probing for a personal definition rather than a perceived societal definition:

RH: how would you define leisure?
Mr. Hasecara: for myself or how do I think it should be defined?
RH: for yourself.
Mr. Hasecara: I guess for me leisure is – when your not emm I- it’s time – whatever you chose to do – in that leisure time – its time that you’re not accountable to anyone for anything – right so – even in my current work that I enjoy I still have to deliver – but leisure time is – okay this person is off – or Mr. Hasecara is off – he’s on leisure time now – whatever he chooses to do – you know we don’t care and he doesn’t have to answer to us. So yeah to me – leisure is kinda just being disconnected from any kind of accountability – or output.
RH: interestingly – how do you think it should be defined?
Mr. Hasecara: I like – I guess that’s my proposed definition.

It should be noted as a limitation of this study I have made no attempt to differentiate between my participants’ meanings that are more important to them and meanings of leisure that reflect what they most frequently do, I have concentrated on developing personal meanings and in so doing the results indicate a combination of what is most important and what is most frequently done for my participants.

Even though this study’s participants were all downshifters, I believe the findings add to the body of literature in leisure studies relevant to meanings of leisure by providing supporting evidence that pleasure, relaxation, absence of obligations, and the absence of pressure (revealed in the changes in leisure) are integral components in the meanings of leisure.

CHANGES IN LEISURE EXPERIENCES

When asked to discuss changes in their leisure experiences following their downshift, the participants revealed some interesting insights.

Less Pressure

Probably one of the most significant findings of this study was the ‘less pressure’ theme. This theme encompassed several labels, which together corroborated Linder’s observations of the harried leisure class (Linder, 1970). In reviewing Linder’s ‘The
harried leisure class’ book, Godbey (2003) stated “the relevance of Linder’s book in 2003 in stunning”, going on to say “The field of leisure studies has largely ignored this issue (that leisure [consumption] takes time and the net result of increasing the tempo of life was to lose some of the pleasure associated with a broad range of activities), although it is the most critical one in terms of constraints to leisure” (p.480). The ‘less pressure’ theme directly addresses Linder’s (1970) concept of harried leisure leading to reduced leisure satisfaction and Godbey’s (2003) assertion that an increased tempo of life will do likewise. Several participants (n=9) touched on this idea, indicating that after downshifting they felt less rushed and more relaxed in their leisure and as a consequence their leisure was considered to be more satisfying and enjoyable.

Contributing to this increased enjoyment was a change in perception, where leisure no longer felt like a rare commodity (n=6), they no longer viewed leisure to be unnecessarily compressed into small time slots (n=8), and there was less of a desire to make their leisure experiences intense (n=5). Thus, this study provides evidence of people who experienced harried leisure, changed careers to have more control of their time, reduced the tempo of their lives and consequently increased their leisure enjoyment and satisfaction.

Several of the participants (n=4) indicated that their post-downshift experiences of leisure, (with less pressures, time constraints, and increased flexibility) are closer to being pure leisure as compared to before they downshifted. Their mention of ‘pure’ suggests that these participants recognized their previous experiences of leisure were constrained,
inferior to what they experience now, and thus, support Godbey’s claim that harried leisure is one of the most critical issues relating to leisure constraints (Godbey, 2003).

A selection of participants (n=5) indicated that prior to downshifting they viewed leisure at a stage beyond harried leisure, where they literally had no leisure (perceived, of course). This is the ultimate constraint to leisure, simply living a life dominated by work. One memorable interviewee (Mrs. Tabanca) said she was like a vegetable outside of work, completely exhausted by the demands of her job, so any time away from work she just vegetated and did nothing. After downshifting, as well as saving her marriage (by spending more time with her husband) she expressed a sentiment echoed by many of the participants (n=13), that of feeling physically energized to want to and to be able to participate in active leisure, as well as being psychologically more receptive to breaking from work to leisure. The lasting impression of leisure for many participants prior to downshifting was simply recuperation time after feeling frazzled from their work demands, whereas now leisure has transformed into something that is more substantial and can be active, creative, fun and more fulfilling. This suggests that these participants recognized a change in values between work and leisure. They were no longer willing to sacrifice personal relationships, personal development and personal health for heavy work demands alone, so they de-prioritized work commitments and in turn increased the prioritization of leisure in their lives.

In an extreme case, Mr. Limer forced himself to give a higher priority to leisure. Even after downshifting he continued to work under demanding work conditions as an economics professor in a University. He suffered severe ailments (diabetes and high
blood pressure after his first year as a professor, cancer after his second year), attributing these ailments to his feverish grant writing, excessive student advising and superfluous class preparation. After his cancer treatment, Mr. Limer forced himself to integrate more leisure into his daily routine, buying a dog to make walking a daily occurrence and developing a garden where he jovially admits to talking with his plants and flowers on a regular basis and thinks it serves as a massive stress reliever. He now considers leisure to be an imperative component of his life.

Although Mr. Limer’s case is extreme, this general recognition amongst my participants that their previous work environments drained them of energy and led to inactive lifestyles is an important finding. This study has identified that modern day professional work environments can easily foster woefully inadequate opportunities for activity, and lead to sedentary inactive lifestyles. This information should be useful for bodies such as the occupational safety and health association (OSHA), to identify potential long-term risks involved in overly sedentary occupations and to ascertain ways of introducing activity into conventionally inactive careers.

**Organic Lifestyle Development**

This theme evolved with several participants discussing changes in their work and leisure and the balance or relationship between them. For some of the downshifters (n=7) the relationship between their work and leisure could easily fall into Wilensky’s ‘fusion’ classification (Wilensky, 1960). This work / leisure relationship category states that work becomes more play like and leisure becomes more work like. Ms.’s Ent, Pelau, Yuhtink,
Zico and Mr.’s Gyul, Naranga, and Jouvert were good examples of bona fide downshifters whose work had transformed according to the fusion description. These participants all made reference to enjoying their work to the point where the distinction between work and leisure was blurry or hazed, with work projects often emerging from leisure projects. Thus, leading to the conclusion that work and leisure fused for this selection of participants. This finding suggests that the distinction between work and leisure has diminished for such participants.

When the participants in this study did talk about work as in something different to leisure, several (n=4) talked about fitting it around leisure (rather than vice versa). Working on projects in unconventional time frames, so that leisure in the middle of week and work projects on the weekend were the norm rather than the exception. Their increased time flexibility led to more enjoyable leisure experiences that were more spontaneous and integrated within their lifestyles.

During the coding phase and developing this organic theme, I started to think of my participants time use in terms of computer nomenclature, in particular fragmentation. When defragging a computer, the aim is to improve the efficiency of the computer’s storage and its operation. The de-fragmentation process moves stored data around in the hard-drive to reduce gaps in the stored memory, and thus increase efficiency of operation. Comparing computer memory allocation to human time allocation, the participants chose to increase the fragmentation of their work and leisure time allocation (to optimize satisfaction rather than efficiency). So given the choice, their mode of operation was less efficient according to computer or systems logic and through this analogy, the notion of
organic was reinforced. Figure 3 is a visualization of this preferred compartmentalization process.

Figure 3: Fragmentation of Time Model

### DE-FRAGMENTED before Downshift: Efficient time allocation

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### FRAGMENTED after Downshift: Organic time allocation

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### CHANGES IN MEANINGS OF LEISURE

As previously mentioned there was no definitive change in the meanings of leisure amongst my participants in terms of value of importance. Leisure increased in value for a significant portion (n=12) following their career downshift, conversely and rather ironically several downshifters (n=5) actually noted leisure depreciated in value after downshifting.

Microeconomics theory provides insight into human behavior that can explain this variation amongst the participants. The "Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility" is derived
from consumer behavior and utility maximization, it states “that for any good or service, the marginal utility of that good or service decreases as the quantity of the good increases, ceteris paribus” (William-King, 2005, chap.5). Thus the utility or in this case ‘satisfaction’ increases more and more slowly as the quantity consumed increases.

However, there is a threshold before this law applies. So assuming that leisure is a normal good in economic terminology, the participants who expressed that leisure became more important following their downshift have not reached their optimal leisure threshold yet. Whereas those participants who expressed that leisure had decreased in value or importance had consumed leisure beyond their optimal leisure threshold.

The supply and demand model, again from microeconomic theory, can also help to explain the different perceptions of leisure following a downshift evident with my participants. Assuming leisure to be a normal good, demand for leisure will decrease as the price increases, and supply will increase as the price increases. This is illustrated in figure 4 below, in the classic supply demand visualization.
As the supply is increased (this is illustrated by moving from AS1 to AS2) then the intersection along the demand curve indicates a lower demand (Y1 to Y2). Assuming a downshift increases the supply of leisure, it can therefore explain that the demand decreases (or the value of leisure consumed decreases). But what about the participants who increased the supply of their leisure and yet their demand increased (leisure appreciated in value)? This may be explained by understanding that the demand function for leisure is not a straight line; it could be a step down function or a negative exponential function.

Economic theory aside, all of the participants interviewed had evaluated their lifestyles and decided to prioritize leisure or the balance between work and leisure in their lives, hence the very reason for the downshift. With the participants who felt that leisure...
was more important or valuable since their downshift, this feeling vindicated their
downshift decision. Where leisure depreciated in value, these participants were not
dissatisfied with their downshift decision per se. They all (n=5) indicated that leisure was
important enough for them to reconsider their careers and change, the issue was more
related to the notion of balance and escape that leisure provided in their previous work
lives, whereby leisure was a necessary escape from stressful work environments. After
the downshift, their work environments were no longer as stressful and therefore their
apparent need for leisure diminished.

DOWNSHIFTING - REGAINING THE ESSENCE OF LEISURE?

This study’s findings have provided considerable insight into answering the
question posed by Juniu (2000) - Can downshifting help to regain the essence of leisure?
(Juniu, 2000). My interpretation of the mixed results that emerged from this study is that
downshifting was definitely one of the catalysts for changes in leisure amongst my
participants, and it was also instrumental in redefining what leisure means to them. So
yes, downshifting can partially help to regain the essence of leisure, but with some
caveats which I will explain.

Leisure was more socially centered for several participants (n=7), but more of
them (n=11) indicated that after downshifting leisure had become more individually
orientated. I don’t believe that the downshifting process has a propensity to make people
less social. Quite the opposite, because the downshifters who gestured towards less social
leisure talked about their new careers as being more socially centered and how their
leisure time provided time to regroup, relax and recharge. So the overall effect of
downshifting did provide for lifestyles that were more socially centered, be it more
interaction through leisure or through work.

    Community involvement tended to increase for most of the female downshifters
(n=9) and stay the same or decrease for most of the male participants (n=7). The females
talked about tangibles; putting more time into working on committee boards; getting
involved in local politics; mentoring ‘at risk’ youth; and even just being a home owner
and having the time to smile and feel genuinely part of a community. The male
downshifters on the other hand, generally did not feel such community ties. A couple
(n=3) of them indicated that after downshifting they were more apt to help out with
volunteering at church, but did not give specific examples of volunteer tasks when probed
for further information. Thus, within this sample of downshifters gender appears to be a
significant factor for predicting increased efforts in community involvement after the
downshift, with females prone to higher community involvement and males less so.

    Juniu (2000), reflecting on Habermas’ view of modern day leisure, remarked that
“leisure is no longer a time for personal growth and contemplation” thus implying
contemplation is an innate quality of the essence of leisure (p.71). Contemplation did not
appear to be high on the list for these downshifters in this study, but with their increased
freedom most of the participants (n=12) expressed that their leisure was used
progressively, more towards personal development goals rather than merely passing time
away or escaping. Affirming Juniu’s (2000) postulation that downshifting can transform
leisure in a way that leads to its essence being regained.
The area that allies weakest with Juniu’s (2000) vision of a leisure that has regained its essence is that of a leisure freed from consumerization and commodification. Juniu (2000) quoted Hemingway as suggesting that “today, consumerism has consumed us in the sense that we are trapped by money, and those elements of creativity and sociability found in leisure are disappearing”, (p.71). Hemingway (1996) further critiqued conventional leisure as directed more towards ‘culture consuming’ rather than ‘culture creating’ (p.36). There was very little evidence within the dataset to indicate that my participants were consciously making this type of adjustment. However, I believe such an adjustment would be akin to somewhat of a cultural revolution, considering how deeply ingrained consumerism is within western culture.

Apart from the social, community and personal development aspects outlined as ways to recover leisure (regain the essence) Juniu (2000) also explained simply doing leisure in a leisurely manner will have a contributing effect (Juniu, 2000). The less pressure theme which indicated the participants enjoyed leisure more when they were less rushed doing it can also be seen as supporting evidence that the downshifters had moved closer to regaining some of its lost essence.

I believe that Juniu’s (2000) interpretation of regaining the essence of leisure is indicative of a paradigm shift, in other words, an extreme change in the values and experience of leisure. Reflecting across the participants interviewed in this study, their answers generally indicated partial changes along the way to them regaining the essence of leisure (as described by Juniu). However, these changes were not on a scale grand enough to signify a complete paradigm shift for them in the way they experienced leisure
according to Juniu’s (2000) vision of such a reclaimed leisure (Juniu 2000). I think the process of downshifting does change the way people experience and perceive leisure and it certainly instills changes in social and personal development aspects of leisure that would satisfy Juniu’s (2000) criteria to recover leisure. However, aspects of regaining the essence of leisure signified by increased community development and a move away from commodified leisure were generally weakly supported by the participants as a whole in this study.

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORK-LEISURE THEORY**

Several downshifters interviewed for this study provided strong supporting evidence for Wilensky’s fusion work-leisure theory. In their comments post-downshift work was obviously crossing over to be experienced as leisure and vice versa. However, one participant’s discussion clearly contraindicated the fusion theory, Mrs. Vaps. She indicated that her leisure-esque like job; she’s a travel writer, influenced how she viewed and what she does for leisure. She explained, she considers traveling and vacationing to be the furthest thing from leisure and merely retreating to her in-laws to do absolutely nothing was what she considered to be premium leisure. Thus, as work transformed to become more leisure like for this individual, she no longer continued to view leisure in the same vein, tying in with the ‘segmentation’ theory of work and leisure.

Supporting evidence for segmentation was also seen within the organic lifestyle development theme. Four participants referred to fitting work around leisure post-downshift (rather than fitting leisure around work). They viewed leisure and work as
different life components and segmented them. However, their downshifts enabled them to segment the components differently in their lives, by increasing their flexibility of when and where they worked. Although segmentation and integration may sound like contradictory ideas, it is the downshifters manipulation of the way segmentation occurs that leads to a more integrated lifestyle.

Another area where this dissertation contributes to the development of work-leisure relationships is that of recognizing some form of symbiosis between work and leisure. What was evident for many of the participants (n=17) in this study is that work and leisure do interact with each other. In trying to establish what changes in meanings of leisure occurred following a downshift, a high proportion of participants (n=12) indicated that leisure increased in value following their downshift. However, a smaller number (n=5) indicated that leisure became less important for them after downshifting. This apparent loss of importance was essentially explained by the law of diminishing returns from microeconomic theory. But it can also be viewed in terms of a symbiotic relationship between work and leisure. Where having too much leisure is considered less valuable, whereas having a balance between work and leisure is considered to be more valuable. This idea has been addressed time and time again in literature spanning numerous academic and professional disciplines, under the guise of work-leisure balance (Harwood Group, 1995; Taylor, 2002). Building on Stebbins’ concept of an optimized leisure lifestyle,

\[
\text{OLL} = \text{CL} + \text{SL} + \text{PBL}
\]

\(\text{OLL} \quad = \text{Optimized leisure lifestyle}\)

\(\text{CL} \quad = \text{Casual leisure}\)
The idea of work-leisure balance could be extended to relate it to an ‘optimized lifestyle’ where, the following relationship would drive the theory,

\[
OL = CL + SL + PBL + W + NDT + FT
\]

where,

\[
\begin{align*}
OL &= \text{Optimized lifestyle} \\
CL &= \text{Casual leisure} \quad SL= \text{Serious leisure} \quad PBL = \text{Project based leisure} \\
W &= \text{Work} \quad FT = \text{Family time} \quad NDT= \text{Non-discretionary time}
\end{align*}
\]

**METHODOLOGICAL ISSUE**

Twenty seven interviews were conducted to collect the primary data for this study, 23 of these were conducted over the phone and 5 were personal interviews. In general there did not appear to be a significant difference between data collected over the phone and data collected personally. In terms of the actual procedure of conducting the interview, I preferred conducting it over the telephone rather than in person. This is difficult to explain, but primarily because participants showed a rather bewildered or diffident demeanor when asked about their leisure followed by long periods of silence. This was easier to ride through on the other end of a telephone than sitting in front of someone.
LIMITATIONS

The results of this study should be viewed in the context of the following limitations. There was considerable variation in the amount of time that the participants had downshifted and were working in their new careers. Some were relative ‘newbies’ to the world of downshifting, having conducted the interview within six months of making their career change, other ‘veterans’ had downshifted over ten years ago. When discussing meanings of leisure for instance, those who were considered veterans were more likely to give ‘stable’ answers. The average time that my participants had been working in their downshifted careers was approximately four to five years.

There is another issue pertinent to reliability which is related to the amount of time participants had downshifted. This study attempted to track changes in leisure and meanings of leisure, however the interpretations were based on a simple cross sectional snapshot of the participants opinions. Thus, the results are subject to recollection and memory loss issues. As well as selective memory issues, whereby participants may favor to remember only remember only the bad things of their leisure prior to downshifting and only the good things after their downshift. This could be circumvented by conducting a longitudinal study, but this in turn would add additional complexity because downshifters would have to be identified and interviewed prior to actually downshifting and then interviewed after they downshift.

Within the dataset, 20 of 27 participants were also designated as bona fide downshifters, that is, they fulfilled the participant selection criteria excellently. However 25% of the participants were considered temporary or marginal downshifters. Most of
these marginal downshifters had given up stable professional careers and had returned back to university to graduate school. The outcome after their graduation may entail them earning more money than in their previous careers and would obviously prevent them from being classified as bona fide downshifters.

Whilst the notion of voluntary change was fundamental in the selection criteria for choosing the participants in this study, it is indeed quite a controversial position to say that all bona fide downshifters voluntarily chose to change their careers. Because the notion of voluntary implicitly implies that people who make this change do so without any conditions compelling them to do so. Quite the contrary, for instance, when someone who is suffering from work induced stress may not voluntarily be choosing to downshift but is in fact facing an ultimatum offered by a doctor or an employer. Therefore, voluntary career change should be interpreted very carefully when making judgment about participants who have downshifted, and some thought should be given to exactly how voluntary was the voluntary change.

The study was not conducted with the purpose of developing universally generalizable results, and in this vein the sample of participants that volunteered to participate in this study did have particular characteristics that strictly inhibited wide generalizations. First, the participants were all well educated, only one in 27 did not have a university degree, thirteen participants held masters degrees, and seven participants had doctorate degrees, so it is fair to say that most of my participants were highly informed and not representative of a large proportion of society.
Secondly, over half of the participants indicated that prior to downshifting their annual income was over $100k and post downshift they were hardly struggling to make ends meet, either because they were still earning a comfortable income (above $50k), they had received a golden handshake from their previous employees, or they had saved a large lump from their previous career. As mentioned in the literature review, downshifting is more Singapore than Rwanda (Etzioni, 1998. In other words downshifting is more likely a practice associated with people earning in the upper middle to higher income brackets, although this is not exclusive. There were a four or five participants who indicated their annual income prior to downshifting was below $50k. However, overall the general impression is that people who downshift were and still are very comfortable financially.

Third, all of my participants communicated with me via email at some stage during the data collection, typically during the recruitment phase, when I was courting them to volunteer. None of the participants that I interviewed had no experience with computers and modern technology. Whilst this is becoming a mute point as the percentage of the population that uses technology or email is increasing rapidly, it still signifies that the sample of people interviewed belong to a section of the population who have access to computers and know how to use them. In other words, downshifters who do not use computers or who aren’t technology savvy may have completely different perspectives of leisure to the participants I interviewed.

Although downshifting was recognized as being one of several contributing factors to the changes in leisure and meanings of leisure documented, I am aware that
personal relationship changes such as getting a divorce or getting married or simply life changes could have been as strong, if not stronger factors in promoting the changes in leisure or meanings of leisure. Whilst discussing the changes several participants (n=10) actually explained that downshifting wasn’t the only relevant factor. There are studies unrelated to downshifting that could explain several of the changes that were documented, such as Baltes and Baltes’ Selection, Optimization and Compensation (SOC) model, the life-span perspective (Abeles, 1987; Cutler & Hendricks, 1990) and stability and novelty in leisure preferences (Crawford, Godbey & Crouter, 1986; Scott & Willits, 1989).

Whilst it served a useful purpose and fundamentally provided the intellectual stimulant to investigate downshifting and leisure, Juniu’s (2000) study identified particular aspects of transformation that she believed important to regain the essence of leisure (Juniu, 2000). It could be argued that hers is a subjective interpretation of the essence of leisure, with a bias towards leisure that is old-fashioned and devoid of technology.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings in this study, whilst not conclusive, have provided valuable insight into the leisure experiences and meanings of downshifters. At the time of undertaking the study, this information was non-existent. Meanings of leisure for downshifters have been found to be similar as for non-downshifters, changes in leisure related to downshifting
have been documented, and various changes in the meanings of leisure have been identified. In the future, this research can be extended by the following:

1. One issue from this study that warrants further investigation is that of leisure, social participation and political activity. One participant, Mrs. Aguchi used the freedom generated by her downshift to become active in local politics, she ran in her local elections (she did not win, but said it was a fantastically rewarding experience). The invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, with cost estimates in excess of a staggering $1.6 Trillion (as of November 13th taken from http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071113/ap_on_go_co/war_costs may have been questioned more thoroughly by a more informed American voting populace that is not so consumed by work and distracted by sports (Chomsky, 1988; Garcia, 2005; Achbar & Wintonick, 2007). Political engagement, social participation and leisure have been researched and theorized about previously (Mayntz, 1960; Schor, 1997; Rojek, 2001, 2002). This line of research could be continued and enhanced by studying downshifters, their political engagement and social participation. Mayntz postulated that “the mere non-work time is by no means the main factor which determines the degree of popular participation in organized social and political life.” (Mayntz, 1960). Schor took it as a given that civic engagement has declined since the beginning of the 1980s and chose to explore a growth in pressures of time and money as one reason for the decline (Schor, 1997).
These postulates could be explored further by designing research to probe for changes in the political and civic engagements of downshifters.

2. During the interpretation phase of this study, a comprehensive study was published in the Harvard Business Journal documenting research on the phenomenon of ‘Extreme Jobs’ (Hewlett, Buck Luce, 2006). Hewlett et al’s research raised serious questions about the sustainability of extreme jobs, and the associated costs from personal and society perspectives. This should be no surprise, considering Hewlett is the founding president of the Center for Work-Life Policy, a think-tank that researches ways to “design, improve and implement workplace policies that increase productivity and enhance personal/family well-being” (CWLP website). Hewlett et al conducted two surveys, 14 focus groups and 35 individual one-on-one interviews, in identifying the repercussions of extreme jobs for family, home, and intimate life they highlighted the following points as critical issues:

- Neglect of housework and homecare
- Health problems: lack of sleep, not enough exercise, reliance on medications to relieve insomnia or anxiety, alcohol consumption
- Work interfering with their ability to have strong relationships with their children
- Dramatically under-invested in intimate relationships
The data collected for my study about downshifters, unknowingly at the time, addresses several of these concerns. Undoubtedly, a high proportion of the participants I interviewed were working in what Hewlett et al classified as ‘extreme jobs’, and my findings provide strong supporting evidence that their health, family relationships and personal relationships significantly improved after downshifting (after leaving their extreme jobs). The connection between these two studies of downshifting and extreme jobs appears to be highly complimentary and would provide a logical continuous line of research. For example, attorneys working ‘extreme jobs’ could be compared to downshifted attorneys in a cost benefit analysis, investigating the critical issues identified by Hewlett et al. Another example could be further mining the data collected from this study to document additional evidence highlighting the costs / sustainability of extreme jobs. Ultimately the goal would be to develop data that can be used to design policy adhering to the axioms of the Center for Work-Life Policy and promote healthy workplaces and lifestyles.

3. One of the premises underlying the action of downshifting is the trade of dollar income for time income, that is, people who downshift believe they will be happier with more control over their time rather than more dollars in their banks. This is a microcosm of the belief that drove the development of several quality of life measurements such as the Physical quality-of-life index (PQLI), the United Nations Human development index (HDI), Bhutan’s Gross national
happiness (GNH) and the New Economics Foundation’s Happy planet index (HPI). These measures of development have evolved because of dissatisfaction with measuring development purely by economic measures such as the gross-national-product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP). The new development measures are based on the assumption that “the ultimate aim of most people is not to be rich, but to be happy and healthy” (Sen, 1999). New Economics Foundation’s Happy Planet Index (HPI) is the latest well being index to be developed and it is an extension of the United Nation’s HDI by including a sustainability aspect of well being, measuring the environmental footprint associated with the pursuit of happiness (Hawkin et al, 1999; Marks, Simms, Thompson & Abdallah, 2006). This growing concern with what development means, and how to measure it realistically is relevant to downshifting. Downshifters have generally decided that their ‘development’ needs to be prioritized more towards ‘quality of life’ rather than purely economic development. This study and further research related to downshifting can be developed to understand issues related to quality of life (QoL) measurement, such as what components should be included in a QoL instrument to accurately reflect people’s evaluations and feelings about their lives and ultimately help to refine such QoL indices. This would therefore propel leisure studies to a powerful position in influencing governmental policy towards development.
Bibliography


LETTER TO RECRUIT DOWNSHIFTERS FROM ONLINE FORUMS/NOTICEBOARDS

Dear Mr(s) X,

I am a British Ph.D Leisure Studies student studying at the Penn State University in the States. My dissertation is about how, if at all, the meaning of leisure changes for people who downshift.

I am looking to find American downshifters to interview for my dissertation (phone interviews are fine) and would appreciate any help whatsoever in locating participants.

I would send the participants a letter of informed consent, informing them about the main goals of the study, a pre-interview questionnaire (this is expected to take 10 -15 minutes) and then I would like to interview them (either over the phone or in person if we live within a reasonable distance). The interview is estimated to take 30 - 45 minutes.

Thank you kindly, I appreciate your help.

Kind regards

Roy Hampton rsh901@psu.edu
Appendix B

FOLLOW UP EMAIL –

EXPLAIN CRITERIA AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

Hello X,

My name is Roy Hampton, I’m a Ph.D Leisure Studies candidate studying at the Penn State University and my dissertation is about how, if at all, the meaning-of-leisure changes for people who downshift.

XX suggested I contact you. She thought you probably fit my participation criteria and you may be interested in sharing your experience with me.

This is my selection criteria for suitable participants:

Essentially the experience I'm looking for people to have VOLUNTARILY chosen is to change their job/career, usually by taking a lower paying job, or less hours in the same job, or switching to a less prestigious career in order to increase their control over their time (i.e. to increase their free time). This change was made whilst the person was between the ages 30 -59? I am interested in meaning of leisure and in particular how, if at all, someone's meaning of leisure changes after they have downshifted. If you think you fit this criteria and would be willing to participate in my study please contact me either through this email address or my cell phone (814-***-****), Kind Regards

Roy
Appendix C

PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

This pre-interview questionnaire will provide me with some background information about you which will be useful in tailoring the interview around your personal experience. At the end of the questions are a few comments about our upcoming interview, it may be useful to read this section and think a little bit about the topics suggested prior to participating in the interview.

Please read the following questions and mark the appropriate answer with an X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your age range?</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-35</th>
<th>36-40</th>
<th>41-45</th>
<th>46-50</th>
<th>51-55</th>
<th>56-60</th>
<th>60+</th>
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<th>What is your gender?</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
<th>Marital status?</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
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<tr>
<th>Number of dependents?</th>
<th>Total number of children &amp; relatives who are financially dependent on you?</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>2-3</td>
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<td>2-3</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Other</td>
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Please read the following questions and mark the appropriate answer with an X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your age range?</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-35</th>
<th>36-40</th>
<th>41-45</th>
<th>46-50</th>
<th>51-55</th>
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<td>1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your highest level of education achieved?</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-Downshift</th>
<th>POST-Downshift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profession?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years in profession?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Dwelling?</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent or own home?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated # of hours at work per week?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with income?</td>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you downshift?</td>
<td>For example, change jobs, refuse a promotion, change profession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please look through the list of descriptors and indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 what applied to your *favorite* leisure activity/experience **PRE-DOWNSHIFT**. Also indicate how these descriptors apply to your favorite leisure activity or experience **POST-DOWNSHIFT**, where:

1 = rarely applies  2 = applies occasionally  3 = applies moderately  4 = applies regularly  5 = applies most of the time

My favorite **PRE DOWNSHIFT** leisure was: __________________________

My favorite **POST DOWNSHIFT** leisure is: __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-downshift</th>
<th>My favorite leisure activity</th>
<th>Post-downshift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is done at my discretion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is challenging</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is creative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Is done alone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provides emotional involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is enjoyable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develops ethical / moral standards</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involves others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involves mental activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is experienced with a large group of people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides good opportunity for self development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is stressful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is done under my control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following is a list of outcomes that people often report deriving from their work. Please RANK ORDER them in order of importance for how you viewed them pre-downshift and now post-downshift.

[1 being most important, 6 being least important]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre downshift</th>
<th>Work outcomes</th>
<th>Post downshift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The sense of accomplishment I got/get from my work</td>
<td>My company or organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The product or service I provide</td>
<td>The type of people (co-workers) I worked/work with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The type of occupation or profession I was/am in</td>
<td>The money I received/receive from my work</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The main purpose of our interview is for me to get a good grasp of what leisure means to you now and what it meant to you before you downshifted. I will ask various questions about what you enjoy doing with your leisure, what your favorite leisure activity or experience is and what types of leisure you do most frequently. I am also interested in how you would have answered these questions prior to downshifting, or in other words what your leisure was like prior to downshifting.

Please try and think about the role of leisure in your life. What you do during your free time, what activities do you consider leisure. How, if at all, leisure has changed in your life following your downshift and finally how did you go about downshifting.
Appendix D

Letter of Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Meanings of Leisure for Downshifters

Principal Investigator: Roy Hampton

Adviser: Dr Garry Chick

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to better understand what leisure means to career downshifters and to see if these perceptions were affected in any way by their act of downshifting.

2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to complete a pre-interview questionnaire and then participate in a digitally recorded interview with the Principal investigator. Once the initial interview has been analyzed the principal investigator may wish to contact you for a follow up interview to clarify certain details or interpretations.

3. Duration/Time: It is expected that the pre-interview questionnaire should take no longer than fifteen (15) to twenty (20) minutes. The main interview is expected to take about
forty five (45) minutes to an hour in duration. If there are any follow up questions it is anticipated that these would take no longer than ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes.

4. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. Only the person in charge will know your identity. Electronic data will be stored and secured at the principal investigator’s residence in a password protected file. Any paper data will be stored in a locked cabinet at the principal investigators residence. Digital recording of any interview will be destroyed after three (3) years upon completion of the study. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, pseudonyms will be used and no personally identifiable information will be shared.

5. **Right to Ask Questions:** Please contact the principal investigator Roy Hampton at (814) 571-3778 or his academic advisor Dr Garry Chick at (814) 863-1941 with questions or concerns about this study.

6. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

   Please indicate whether or not you agree to allow the researcher to use quotes directly from your interview that are pertinent to the researcher’s interpretations.

   _____ I grant permission for my quotes to be used in publications. I will not be identified.

   _____ I DO NOT grant permission for my quotes to be used in publications.

   You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.
You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

_____________________________________________ _____________________
Participant Signature       Date

_____________________________________________ _____________________
Person Obtaining Consent
Appendix E

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Describe the downshifting process that you went through? Why did you decide to downshift? How did you make the change?

2. Tell me about the role of leisure in your life? How do you define leisure? Do you have enough, too little, or too much leisure?

3. What is a typical weekend like for you?
   a. What was a typical weekend like for you before you downshifted?

4. Describe a typical weekday?
   a. What was a typical weekday like for you prior to downshifting?

5. What activities do you enjoy doing when you are at home?
   a. What activities did you enjoy doing when you were at home before your downshifted?

6. What activities do you enjoy doing away from home?
   a. What activities did you enjoy doing away from home before you downshifted?

7. Describe some of the differences in the way you experience leisure now as compared to before you downshifted? Do you feel more or less need to achieve certain goals in your post-downshift leisure? Were you more or less rushed in your pre-downshift leisure as compared to post-downshift leisure?

8. Do you think your post-downshift leisure is more?
   a. Socially orientated? Y/N – Why?
   b. Community orientated? Y/N – Why?
   c. Geared towards personal development? Y/N – Why?

9. Since your downshift, how has your consumption of leisure services and goods changed, if at all?

10. Has leisure become more meaningful for you since your downshift?

11. What else is important for me to know in order to understand the role of leisure in your life and how it changed since your downshift?
VITA

Roy Hampton was born in Middlesex, England in 1973. After completing his secondary education in Buckinghamshire at the Holmer Green Upper School and The John Hampden Grammer School, he entered The Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, London in 1991. He graduated with a 2:1 MEng degree in Petroleum Engineering in 1995 and followed this with a Masters degree in Marine Policy at the London School of Economics.

Roy worked in the oil industry as a petroleum engineer from 1997-2000 for Baker Hughes and as an independent consultant.

He completed the first year of a masters degree in Energy Economics at The Pennsylvania State University, before changing focus and starting a doctoral degree in Leisure Studies in 2002. Between 2002 and 2007 Roy worked as an Assistant Instructor, Teaching Assistant and Graduate Research Assistant in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management at The Pennsylvania State University. He was also an Instructor in the Department of Kinesiology’s activity program teaching squash and tennis classes.

Roy now works in Sports Marketing industry.

Permanent Address: Delray Beach, Florida.

This dissertation was typed by the author.