

# TOWARDS A PROTOTYPICAL MODEL FOR THE INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN DISABILITY, LEISURE AND BELONGING

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# Outline

- Background
- Aim
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- Results
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- Conclusion

# Background 1: What is leisure?

- Many definitions from a vast array of perspectives (psychological, sociological, cultural, etc.)
- However, the core of all definitions is to have a say in the way one's time is spent.
- It is generally agreed that leisure has the following structural features: TIME, SPACE, ACTIVITY, FUNCTION and LEVEL OF FREEDOM.
- These features constitute the meaning of leisure for both individual and society.

# Background 2: Leisure and disability?









# Background 3: leisure and disability

- Leisure studies in state of crisis due to not accommodating necessary theoretical and methodological themes in the discipline.
- In postmodern times leisure should be studied as the key domain in which people create meaning through expressing and exploring their freedom.
- Aitchison (2009) believes that leisure studies has not been able to develop a coherent body of knowledge on disability and leisure: we need new definitions and wider engagement with disability research.

# Aims

- General aim: to answer the question: can the notion of 'belonging' contribute to inclusive leisure theory based upon this research?
- Specific aim: to construct a prototypical conceptual model that reflects the interrelationships between disability, leisure and belonging.

# Method (1)

- Design: Qualitative (Grounded Theory) N=1
- Respondent: Marian, 56 year old woman with SMA (Spinal Muscular Atrophy), academic education, lives in a so-called FOKUS-project, is active in her own consultancy and coaching business.
- Semi-structured interview: questionnaire has 15 sensitizing questions revolving around the conceptualization, manifestation, experience and interpretation of the three leading concepts: disability, belonging and leisure.

# Method (2)

- Procedure: Interview was digitally recorded, while taking notes (35 mins). Transcription presented to Marian, who checked and commented.
- Analysis: First round: axial coding, followed by selective coding: 3 concepts complemented by properties.
- Second interview with Marian (2 hrs) on results of the first round (focus on 3 concepts, their properties and interrelationships). Amendment of results.
- Analysis: second round: Matrix. Checked with Marian (2x). Minor amendments + approval of profile.

# Results (1) concept: Disability

- ‘My handicap is the cloak around my shoulders, the eyes through which I look, the ears through which I hear, the hands through which I feel and the shadow voice that always makes me ask: ‘What does x mean for me?’’
- ‘My handicap is the fence around my life that determines the margins of manoeuvre for my activities. It is the playground and restriction of my life’.

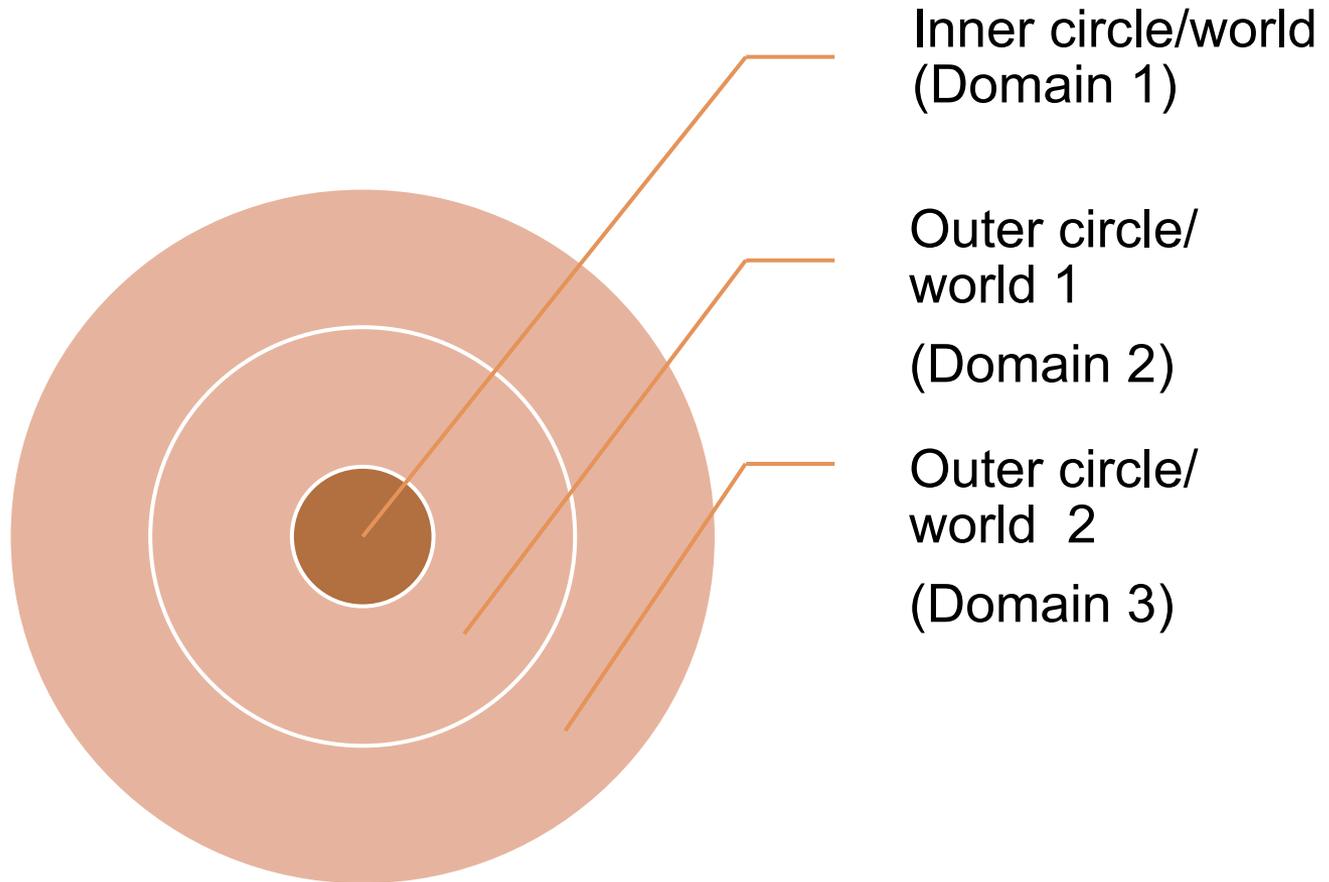
# Results (2) concept: Leisure

- 'Fundamentally, leisure for me is to stand in an empty space, where silence reigns'.
- 'Leisure is the freedom of having control over my time and activities'.
- 'Leisure also means to be not available'.
- 'Leisure implies having no obligations'.
- 'There is a type of leisure that belongs to sociality'.

# Results (3) concept: Belonging

- ‘Belonging is a connection through heart and soul’ – it is something intimate, positive and has to do with unconditional love’.
- ‘Belonging is your vein of life, it is part of yourself’.
- ‘Belonging is the inner feeling that you belong to a group or to God’.
- ‘I differentiate between the personal and the public domains when thinking about belonging. The concept has different layers: personal, intimate, but also broader, societal’.

# Results (4): Basis = worldview: Relational Space



# Results (5): Matrix

## Profile Marian: interrelationships between Disability, Leisure and Belonging

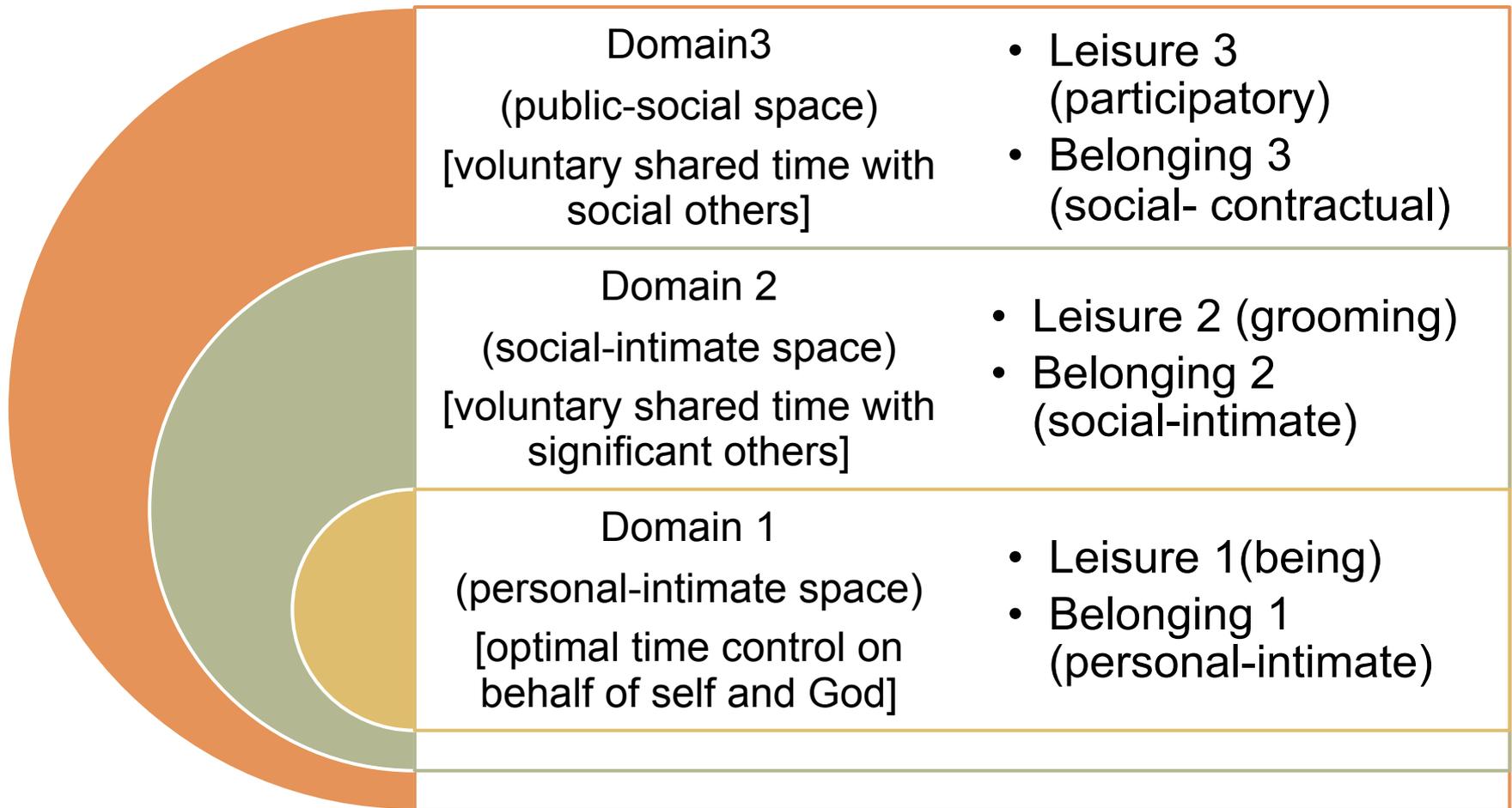
<b>Context (space)</b>	<b>Domain 1 Personal-intimate</b>	<b>Domain 2 Social-intimate</b>	<b>Domain 3 Social-contractual</b>
Constraints			
Feelings			
<b>Leisure</b>			
Fundamental attitude			
Agents			
Activities			
Experienced freedom			
Function			
<b>Sense of Belonging</b>			

# Results (6): Interrelationships

## Profile Marian: interrelationships between Disability, Leisure and Belonging

<b>Context (space)</b>	<b>Domain 1</b> Personal-intimate (spiritual space)	<b>Domain 2</b> Social-intimate (socializing space)	<b>Domain 3</b> Social-contractual (public-social space)
<b>Constraints</b>	Feels least handicapped. Optimal freedom	Feels handicapped, but it's manageable Medium freedom	Inaccessibility: Feels most handicapped Minimal freedom
<b>Leisure</b>	<b>Leisure 1</b> (heart) (being-leisure) Necessary availability for self and God Optimal control of time	<b>Leisure 2</b> (soul) (grooming leisure) Voluntary availability for significant others Shared time	<b>Leisure 3</b> (mind) (participatory leisure) Voluntary availability for 'social' others Temporary shared time
<b>Belonging</b>	<b>Belonging 1</b> (heart) (personal-intimate belonging) – to oneself and/or God.	<b>Belonging 2</b> (soul) (social-intimate belonging)- heart-soul connection, 'at homeness'	<b>Belonging 3</b> (mind) (social-conditional belonging) – to a group/community and or society (agreement)

# Results (7): Interrelationships model



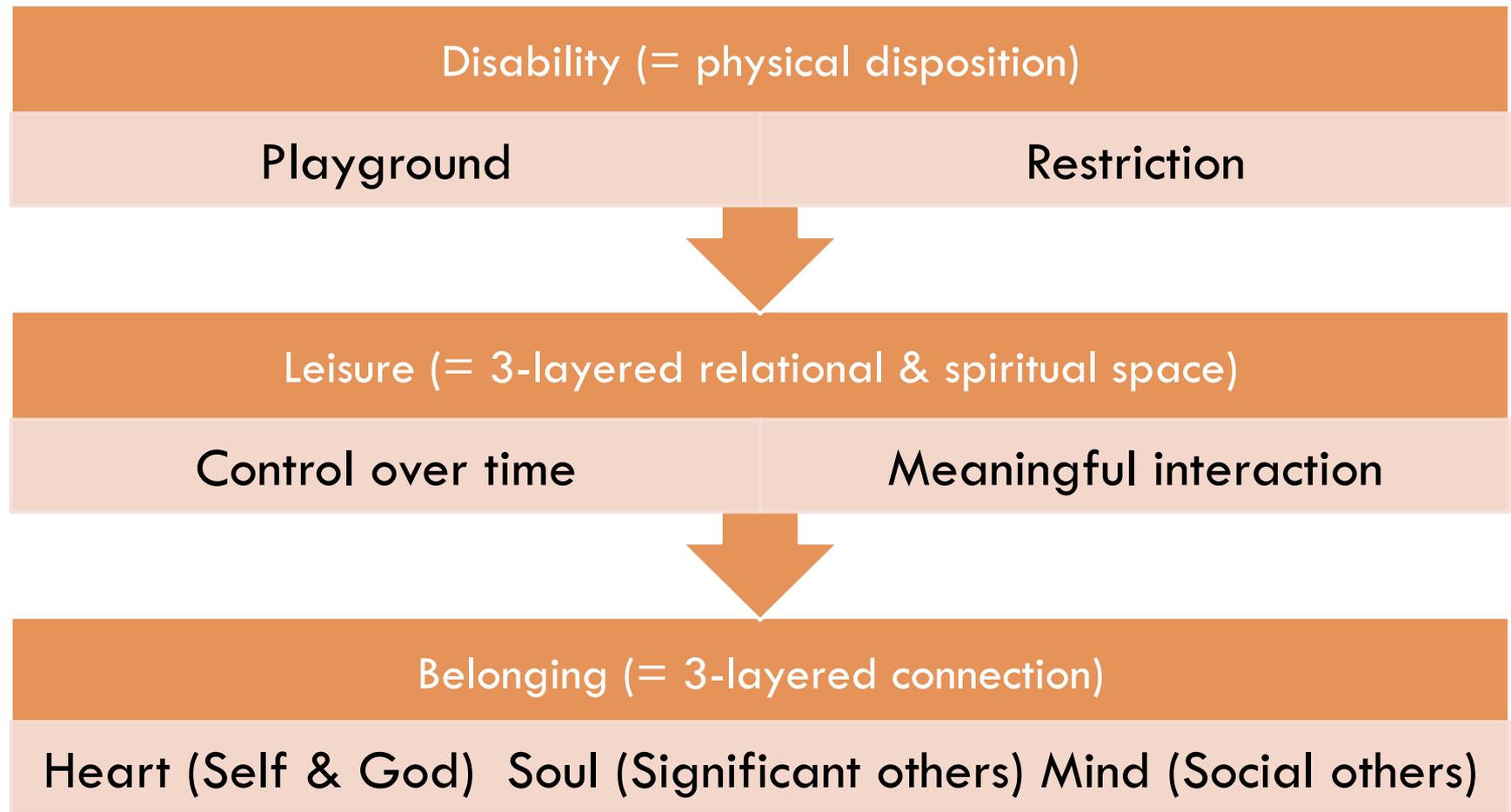
# Results (8): Interrelationships

- Being-leisure corresponds with personal-intimate belonging (domain 1): Function: happiness, personal growth, life satisfaction and re-creation
- Grooming leisure corresponds with social-intimate belonging (domain 2): Function: Idem, QoL, fun
- Participatory leisure corresponds with social-contractual/conditional belonging (domain 3): Function: personal growth, QoL, re-creation and social involvement

# Results (9): Interrelationships: conclusion

- Disability forms the 'playground' for leisure (i.e. it demarcates/limits leisure possibilities).
- Leisure forms the fundamental precondition for belonging; there is a causal relationship between the experience of control over leisure time and the nature of the sense of belonging.
- Belonging is a heart, soul and mind connection between self, significant others and social others.

# Results (10): Model: conclusion



# Discussion (1)

- Theory on Disability: (i) conceptual difference between disability and handicap (ii) 'handicap' as a medical, or social or contextual construct
- Theory on Leisure: Different approaches (i) academic and professional interests (ii) academic disciplines (economy, psychology, sociology, etc.) (iii) specialization within social sciences (focus on power, or function, etc.) (iv) leisure as meaning-making (v) Leisure + disability
- Theory on Belonging: Study on different levels: (i) conceptual: being + becoming (ii) Place/space; social locations, migration/mobility (iv) feeling at home in a place (v) self, others and environment + time, resources and structures of meaning

# Discussion (2)

- Dialogue between the outcomes of this study and existing theory
- Aitchison: Leisure should be defined by WHO people with disabilities encounter and interact with, rather than by WHEN, WHAT and WHERE only. Meaningful social interaction is central = supports outcomes of this study
- Subfield '*Disability Leisure*' is yet to be developed. Currently: '*Disability Leisure*' = disability sports.

# Conclusions

- There is evidence that leisure theory should be complemented by the contextual theory of disability (includes both the medical and social models): (i) it should reckon with the nature of disability: a person with SMA, e.g., cannot participate in physical sports (ii) to be inclusive, leisure theory should integrate the notion of belonging (a central indicator for inclusiveness).
- More research is needed in order to validate the conveyed prototypical model of the relationships between disability, leisure and belonging.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

