RAMBLING AS CONTRIBUTOR AND CONTRAST IN PERSONAL DAILY LIFE

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Abstract

The presentation is based on a study among Norwegian ramblers and recreationists, presenting and explaining with their own written words why rambling, walking, skiing etc is important to them. We reached the informants through magazines etc. and invited whoever was tempted to write. One hundred persons responded; around \( \frac{3}{4} \) of them women.

Rambling is very much about maintaining or restoring the good life. Both categories are present in the material, and the study indicates that rambling etc contributes profoundly to quality-of-life (QoL), both for physical and mental well-being, and primarily in two ways: the short (daily) walk in the neighbourhood (very often a forest) and the longer hike (in weekends, holidays) usually in the mountains.

This seeming dichotomy is actually a complementing set of activities and areas. The short and the long trip – in different environments – contribute differently to the building of personal QoL and have a different position in relation to daily life (due to distance, time use, and experiences and benefits achieved). The short trip contrasts the daily routines with necessary ingredients (the walking itself, quietness, nature …) in order to shape more complete and satisfying days. The long hiking trip is more profound in its contribution, through peace and reflection, coping with physical and mental challenges etc. In addition to amenity, it is very much about “re-creation” or “recharging the batteries”.

Our study seems to support the following interaction model in the building or restoring of a good life: Personal needs (due to physical, mental fatigue) + own effort (rambling etc) + qualities in the recreational area \( \rightarrow \) personal and societal outcomes (good life, improved health etc).

We will also discuss theoretical issues (QoL, environmental psychology, motivation and benefits) and empirical findings concerning the quality of recreational areas in the neighbourhood (naturalness, forest landscape, facilitation, distance etc).