

Is Rock Climbing the new Golf?

The Social Dynamics of Bouldering

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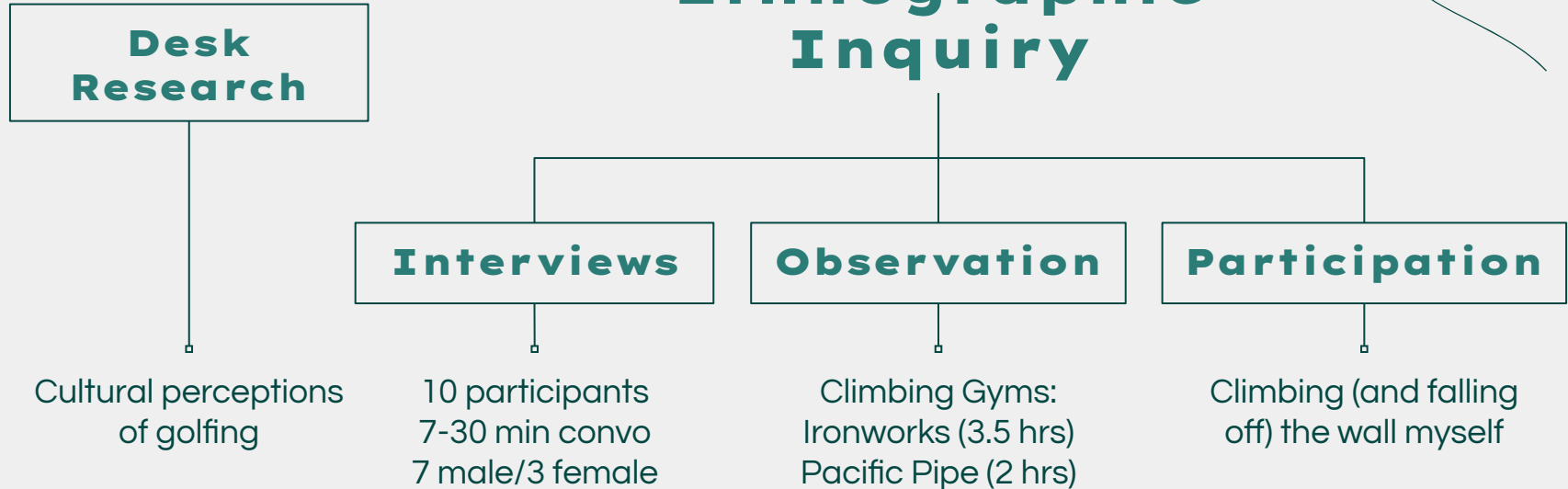
Conclusion

Final findings, reflections, and thoughts about future research directions.



Methodologies

Ethnographic Inquiry

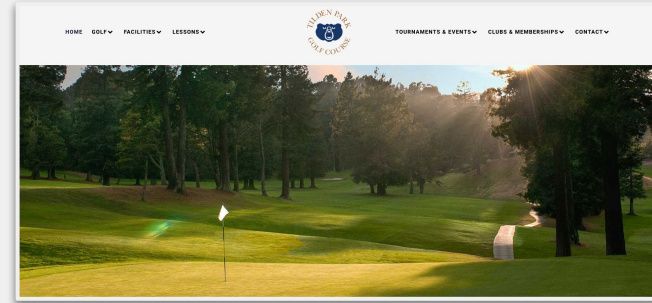


The Landscape of Golf (Desk Research)



Claremont Country Club

- Centered on Club House
- Dedicated to rules (No Denim!)
- Membership ~\$5K + 2 referrals
- Exclusive



Tilden Park Golf Course

- Centered on Golfing
- Lessons, youth camps, beginner programs
- Membership \$50/month
- For all



Who are golfers? (Desk Research)

- Male Dominated (77% in 2021)
- Popular among elite
- Associated with business and networking
- Majority aged 57+
- Gen Z (4%), Millennials (12%)
- No normative body type



Observations on Climbing Spaces

Two Touchstone Gyms



Berkeley Ironworks

- SouthWest Berkeley, opened 2000
- Known for fitness facilities
- Visited on Latinx climb night
- 60/80 climbers present when visited



Pacific Pipe

- West Oakland, opened 2020
- Largest climbing gym in US
- 150/170 climbers present when visited



A line drawing of a person with dark hair and a beard, wearing a green t-shirt and light-colored pants, climbing a rope. The person is shown in profile, facing right, with their left hand gripping the rope high up and their right hand lower down. Their legs are also positioned to pull themselves up. The background is a simple line drawing of a rock face.

Who are climbers?

1/3 of climbers are Female

Majority white, but still racially diverse

Majority age: early 20's - late 30's

Athletic, but diverse body types

4/10 climbers work in the tech industry

2/10 climbers were students



Social Group Dynamics



**Significant
Others**



**Climbing
Friends**



**Life
Friends**

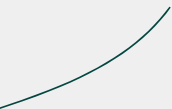


**Work
Friends**





Key Insight # 1



Both sports are measured by **individual achievements**, but are supported and improved through **collective efforts**.



Barriers to Entry

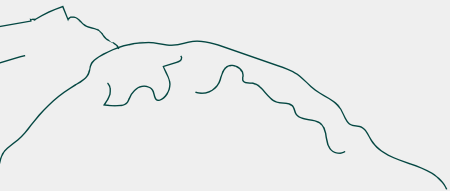
	Golfing	Climbing
Monthly Membership	\$50 - \$5K	\$85
One-Time Pass	\$18 - \$70	\$22
Shoes	\$60 - \$280	\$90 - \$220
Other Equipment	\$250 - \$3000	\$50 - \$150



Key Insight #2

Rock climbing community stands out **culturally** for it's welcoming attitude





Key Insight # 3

Climbing gyms are viewed as a place to combine elements of **leisure, fitness, and social collaboration**. Not work.



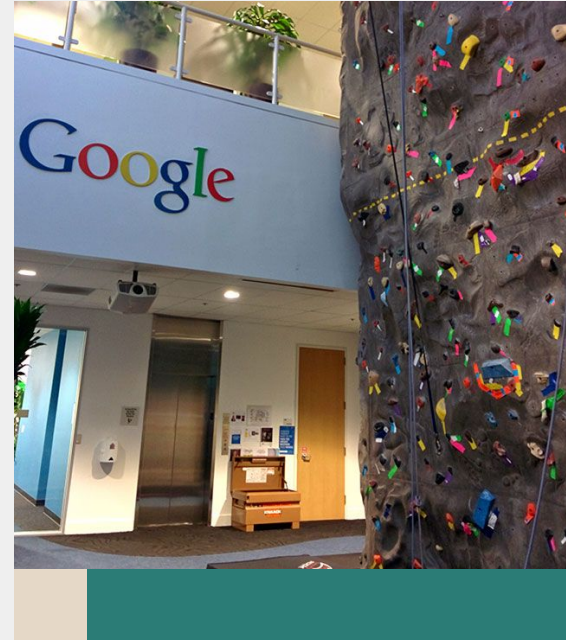
Conclusion

Rock climbing may be growing to become the social sport of younger generations, but it's participants are committed to keep the gym a “work free zone”, at least for now.



Missed Opportunities:

- Finding more “Work Friend” dynamics
- Observing gyms in Palo Alto or San Francisco
- Work campuses that have gyms
- Companies that offer climbing gym memberships as a perk



THANKS!

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