

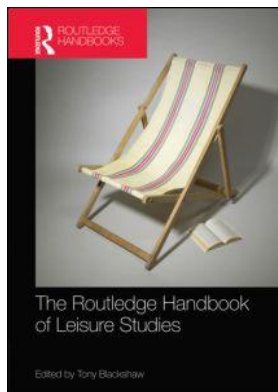
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Tony Blackshaw

### **Feminist Leisure Studies**

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# 3

## FEMINIST LEISURE STUDIES

### Origins, accomplishments and prospects

*Karla A. Henderson*

#### **Introduction**

When I was growing up in rural America, over 50 years ago, I was what most people would call a tomboy. I especially had a passion for baseball and I worked persistently to get good by throwing a rubber ball against my family's barn and hitting it, at first with a big stick and then eventually with a real bat. I was better than anyone in my primary school. The boys got to sign up for 'Little League Baseball', and I wanted to play too. But when I boldly asked the coach if I could try out for the team, he laughed and said maybe I could play girls' softball when I got into high school. My feminist consciousness was raised that day, although I could not put it into words until much later in my life. Women and their involvement in sports and leisure, at least in the Western world, have come some distance since the 1950s. This story is mine and this chapter reflects my perspective regarding the origins, accomplishments, and prospects for feminist research about leisure, women, and gender. Every feminist leisure scholar has a somewhat different story and would likely interpret scholarship in varying ways. I offer this chapter, however, as one perspective that is open for further expansion, discussion, and discourse.

Although the study of leisure became visible in the latter half of the twentieth century, feminist perspectives on women's leisure have been present in Leisure Studies only since the early 1980s. During these three decades the topics, methods, and analyses have evolved. The earliest studies focused largely on the disadvantages of being female in relation to personal and fundamental issues surrounding leisure opportunities. Today, perspectives for analyses are more complex, with a focus on social structure, gender, and power relations pertaining to leisure. Further, multiple methods have been applied to study leisure, women, and gender from feminist perspectives. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the contributions of feminist approaches to better understanding leisure and leisure behaviour.

#### **Clarifying feminisms**

Feminism is an ideology and a social political movement. Describing and defining feminisms may appear somewhat unnecessary at this juncture. However, since this chapter is about the contributions of feminisms, I want to be clear about multiple perspectives. Recognizing the

forms of feminism may be important, since one single definition does not encompass all the possibilities. A description that I once saw on a poster attributed to Rebecca West (1913), written during what has been described as the first wave of feminism, stated:

I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat.

In addition to this simple statement, however, feminism has been viewed from various philosophical perspectives. In earlier work with my colleagues (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, and Freysinger, 1989; 1996), we identified three primary perspectives describing feminisms: liberal, socialist, and radical. Liberal feminism aligns itself with political connections to individualism. Therefore, the core relates to the importance and autonomy of the individual and the equality and freedom that should be offered to all humans. Socialist feminism is somewhat related to Marxism but takes the analysis beyond capitalism to recognize that patriarchy is a critical contributor to women's oppression. To this extent, socialist feminism acknowledges the connections between the material conditions of society and social structures and ideologies. Radical feminists suggest that the oppression of women is the root of all oppression and that patriarchal domination must be overcome through transformation of the systems that have defined gender and power. Thus, radical feminists would say that simply advocating for equality between men and women, regarding leisure or any other dimension of life, only serves to perpetuate an oppressive system.

At the turn into the twenty-first century, post-structuralism gained popularity among scholars studying leisure (e.g., Aitchison, 2000; Wearing, 1998). Advocates of this perspective focused on deconstructing traditional texts (e.g., language, meanings, symbols) and structures (e.g., education, work, leisure) so as to challenge established categories. Post-structuralism offered a way of studying how knowledge is produced, and critiqued structuralist premises related to the assumption of one scientific truth. For example, a post-structuralist approach might emphasize that being a woman may have numerous meanings, which could all have implications for leisure. History and culture condition the study of underlying assumptions and structures, which are subject to biases and misinterpretations. Further, gender-power relationships are critical to consider from post-structuralist perspectives (Aitchison, 2005). A post-structuralist approach also mandates that to understand a concept such as leisure requires questioning the systems that produced the knowledge. Questioning has been the foundation for much of the feminist research about women and leisure over the past three decades.

Morgan (1984) argued that feminism has been evident in every culture and every period of history since the subordination of women began. Three evolving waves of feminism, mainly pertaining to the US, have been discussed (Walker, 1995). I point out these waves to show the dimensions of feminism and how its evolution has implications for current and future examinations of leisure, women, and gender. First-wave feminism, arguably, began in the late eighteenth century and ended in the US with the ratification of the 20th Amendment to the Constitution, which gave women the right to vote. First-wave feminism addressed primarily how women were human beings, as noted in the above quote attributed to West, and how they should be able to vote and not be treated like a man's property. The second wave of feminism emerged in the mid-twentieth century and focused on gender equality related to political, legal, and economic rights based primarily on variations of liberal, and to some degree to socialist and radical, feminisms (Aitchison, 2005). The criticism often levelled at this

second wave, however, was that it focused on white middle-class heterosexual women. The presence of a third wave of feminism today is arguable in terms of its necessity. Although it builds on second-wave feminism, it also seeks to assure that black women, non-heterosexual, low-income, and women in developing countries are part of the conversation, and emanates primarily from postmodern and post-structuralist premises. These waves are also reflective of how feminists studying leisure emerged as part of systems aimed at equity and social justice.

Two other words central to feminism that can be briefly clarified are 'woman' and 'gender'. To be female means to have specific biological structures and functions. However, to be defined as a woman comes not only from those biological characteristics but also from social constructions of the meanings of gender. Gender is the social construction, including the cultural connections associated with one's biological sex. It refers to how society defines expectations and behaviours associated with being female (i.e., femininity) or male (i.e., masculinity). Gender is an ongoing process and not an inborn biological trait. Further, gender dictates behaviours that are produced and reproduced through people's actions (Henderson, 1994), as well as the power relations in society. The focus of this chapter is on leisure, women, and gender, which includes how performing gender has implications for the leisure of both women and men. As I will explain shortly, feminists have focused both on women and on gender in their research about leisure.

Regardless of how feminism might be embodied, all perspectives in some way point to a critique of social structures influencing gender, and can provide a mechanism for social change and the transformation of current ways of thinking. The question of interest in this chapter addresses what contributions feminisms have made to a better understanding of leisure and leisure behaviour. Examining the evolution and content of applications of feminism in the study of leisure, women, and gender is a good starting-place.

### **The stages of feminist analyses applied to leisure, women, and gender**

The basis of feminism had its origins in women's rights. The foundational examination of women's leisure evolved from recognizing the social justice issues surrounding the oppression and diminished quality of life for women as well as for other traditionally disadvantaged groups. Tetrault (1985) originally proposed feminist phase theory, which Henderson (1994) and Aitchison (2001) adapted into five stages to describe the past and potential of leisure research. The next stages of this research are evolving in new ways, described as gender justice by Aitchison (2013) and as intersectionality by Henderson and Gibson (2013).

The first phase or stage was termed *invisible women* in the leisure literature. As noted earlier, little research about women existed in the leisure literature until the early 1980s, even though leisure research publications had begun over a decade earlier (e.g., *Journal of Leisure Research* in 1969). Fortunately, the first issue of *Leisure Studies*, published in 1982, had two articles about women that were written by women (i.e., Deem, 1982; Glyptis and Chambers, 1982). Studies about leisure, women, and gender now constitute about 10% of the research studies published in the primary English-language journals (Henderson and Gibson, 2013).

The second stage was labelled compensatory or *add women and stir*. Women were acknowledged as potentially missing from the leisure literature but were discussed as an addition to the real discussion of traditional views of leisure (e.g., leisure as non-work time). Wimbush and Talbot (1988) critiqued this compensatory stage to suggest that including women was important, but the analyses must go beyond simply noting that women should be considered, to also examine power relationships that existed. The problem with this compensatory

phase was that some questions were raised about the ghettoization of research about women's leisure (Deem, 1999). For example, when research about women was a separate session at an academic conference, often results from this research were not part of the mainstream of the leisure literature.

The third phase was described as dichotomous *sex/gender differences*. These studies, both in the past and currently, focus on differences between males and females. These analyses may refer to gender differences but are sometimes about biological sex differences and not gender structures. Such studies may provide interesting insights if they move beyond simply identifying differences (i.e., treating sex or gender as more than just an independent variable), to interpret the meanings of those differences. The scholarship that underpins these studies can also serve to reinforce the status quo if the historical, cultural, and social contexts are not explored. Examining differences can be important in addressing issues of distributive justice if it moves beyond those differences being considered solely the conclusions of the research.

The study of *women-only* from articulated feminist perspectives is a stage that remains important in examining the nuances of leisure more broadly, especially for diverse groups of women. In this phase, the leisure of women is examined not in relation to men but in order to understand the importance and meaning of leisure pertaining to women in different life contexts. This approach also allows for the taken-for-granted aspects of women's lives to be explored, such as their everyday leisure (e.g., family relationships). Understanding the experiences of different groups of women also can serve as a way to interpret the meanings of leisure in more nuanced ways related to multiple identity characteristics, in addition to gender.

The discussion of *gender* and its applications was identified as a fifth stage, as evidenced by explorations of gender roles, gender relations, masculinity, and femininity in the leisure literature. This phase focuses on how cultural meanings and connections are associated with expectations regarding the social construction surrounding one's biological sex. This analysis goes beyond socialization to also address unequal power relations based on gender, which reflects emerging post-structuralist analyses.

As discussed later in this chapter, these five stages have opened the door for the next possible stages, linking post-structuralism and third-wave feminism to address the interaction of gender with other identity markers such as race, class, sexual identity, disability, and culture (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). Similarly, Aitchison (2003; 2005; 2013) has also suggested that the next stage of feminist research about leisure, women, and gender relates to examinations of the social-cultural nexus leading to policy analysis. This examination of the stages of research illustrates how studying women and gender from feminist perspectives has shown a progression and growth in epistemology, and has offered a means to correct and transform social policy and practice.

### **The growth of topics and themes in feminist studies of leisure**

Another way to summarize the accomplishments of the feminist examinations of leisure is to articulate the topics and themes about women and gender that have appeared in the published literature. Henderson and her colleagues have provided five integrative reviews that overview the literature about leisure, women, and gender in the major English journals for the past 30 years (i.e., Henderson, 1990, 1996; Henderson, Hodges, and Kivel, 2002; Henderson and Hickerson, 2007; Henderson and Gibson, 2013). [Table 3.1](#) provides a matrix of the findings from these five systematic reviews. Summaries of these findings show the convergence as well as divergence of themes about leisure, women, and gender uncovered in the literature.

Table 3.1 An examination of leisure research about women and gender from 1980 to 2010

	1980–89	1990–95	1996–2000	2001–5	2006–10
Number of articles	Not available	75 (6 years)	74 (5 years)	67 (5 years)	101 (5 years)
Percentage solely qualitative	Not available	Not available	60%	62%	64%
<i>Topics/themes</i>					
Inclusion	Common world in inequality	Multiple and varied meanings	Intersection of gender with other identity markers		Necessity of social inclusion
Interpersonal	Social importance of leisure for women				Friendship and social support
Family and roles	Containers of the home and non-structured activities	The more roles the less leisure	Family roles		Extended view of family relationships
Nature of activity, time, and space	Nature of leisure/fragmentation	Leisure as a positive and negative context	Claiming leisure space	Importance of active leisure	Women and physical/mental health
Beyond constraints	Lack of entitlement	Constraints more salient for some groups of women	Negative aspects of leisure in women's lives	Structural social forces/constraints in context	Resistance and empowerment
Epistemology	Significance of gender analysis		Hegemonic significance of gender	Resistance and leisure/use of critical theory	Feminist perspectives expanded
Beyond ethnocentricity	Globalization of women's leisure			Cultural descriptions	

The sources for these five integrative reviews included studies from nine primary English-language refereed journals: *Annals of Leisure Research*, *Journal of Leisure Research*, *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, *Leisure/Loisir*, *Leisure Sciences*, *Leisure Studies*, *Society and Leisure/Loisir et Société*, *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, and *World Leisure Journal*. The contents of all articles with the keywords of women, men, girls, boys, feminism, gender, or related words such as widow, caregiver, family, gay, masculinity, or lesbian in the title, the abstract, or among the listed keywords were identified. Those articles that dealt with professional issues regarding women, recreation, careers, and leadership were not included, as the authors chose to focus on leisure behaviour as the context, and not on management issues. Although additional papers have been delivered at conferences and included in book chapters, only these

widely accessible refereed journal articles were used. Further, the reviews delimited the work to the English language not because no other work was occurring outside English-language journals, but because translations from other languages were not easily available. These journals have a North American bias, admittedly, but they do offer some context for comparisons of topics and themes about leisure, women, and gender since the early 1980s.

The number of articles about leisure, women, and gender seems to be growing. Some of the increase from 2006 to 2010 may also be related to broader definitions of family and a small but growing presence of articles addressing men's leisure as well as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered, and non-heterosexual identities. Also, the *sine qua non* of this research has focused on qualitative methods, although a great range existed in comparing the analyses done since 1996. The relationships between epistemology and methods are central to the construction of both knowledge and power (Aitchison, 2005) and will be discussed later in this chapter with regard to a summary of the contributions of feminist research.

The themes in this leisure literature seemed to evolve from a singular focus on finding the meaning of leisure for women (i.e., a common world) to recognizing the range of meanings associated with leisure, women, and gender (i.e., importance of social inclusion). The research has gone from fairly descriptive explanations about women and leisure to greater theoretical critiques of the sources and implications of leisure for not only women but women and men in different life contexts.

As Table 3.1 shows, several broad themes have persisted and evolved in importance over the years. This matrix of themes is not mutually exclusive, but provides something of a visual framework for identifying the topics as they have developed. Three themes have been particularly stable over the years. One is the gendered roles of women related to the importance of home and the family. A second relates to the examination of constraints described in the initial review as lack of entitlement. As constraints have been examined over the years, the focus has changed from the negative implications of constraints to a focus on resisting constraints and finding empowerment in leisure. Third, an identification of the nature of leisure, starting from the fragmented nature of women's leisure, has evolved into identifying the possibilities of leisure for health.

Two other areas seem to have emerged since the first review. The first is gender analysis as it relates to explanations of leisure behaviour for women. The early writing, although often discussed in terms of gender roles, focused solely on women and their leisure. In the past 20 years gender has emerged related to the implications of feminist perspectives on continuing to understand leisure, as well as to highlight internal reflections on how women and gender should be studied. This perspective also addresses how feminist approaches can include men. Second, although a limitation of these reviews has been the ethnocentrism focused on the English language, more studies reflecting the globalization of women's leisure and the cultural descriptions have become evident in the twenty-first century.

This body of literature over this period has continued to reflect the thinking of feminist researchers as well as of individuals involved in ongoing examinations of the meanings of leisure and leisure behaviour from diversity perspectives. This research has provided identifiable contributions to the field of Leisure Studies and, perhaps more importantly, has pointed toward future directions for research from feminist perspectives.

### Contributions to Leisure Studies

Eichler (1980) suggested that feminist research at its best should serve as a critique of existing research, a correction of the biases that have existed, and a groundwork for the transformation



of social science and society (e.g., through future research, policies, and practice). A characteristic of feminist research is putting women at the centre of the analysis. Further, feminism also addresses the deconstruction of research in order to ascertain what is not in the literature and where feminist or gender analyses would be helpful.

In reflecting on the leisure literature, the challenge is to explicate how feminist research focused on women and gender has addressed aspects of critique, correction, and transformation. Feminist research into Leisure Studies, however, has not occurred in a vacuum. Research about other areas such as diversity and inclusion has complemented this research. Nevertheless, several directions in which feminist research has led leisure research may be worth considering further: epistemology and methodology; leisure behaviour and constraints; professional development; globalization, intersectionality; and equity and social justice.

### ***Epistemology and methodology***

Feminist researchers as well as others have openly disputed the assumption that science is objective and value free. Dispassionate and disinterested research cannot occur in a feminist framework if the goals are critique, correction, and transformation. Although most feminist scholars would agree that a feminist *methodology* does not exist, the influence that feminist researchers have had on epistemologies and expanding methods cannot be denied.

Epistemology refers to ways of knowing and understanding the social realities of the world. The inclusion of the study of women was the first example of how leisure-research epistemology was enhanced by feminists. Feminist epistemology has been instrumental in emphasizing that identifying differences in gender or any other identity marker without examining the social and power structures in operation is not useful. Further, feminist epistemologies have also emphasized the idea of praxis (hooks, 1989), in that theory and application must occur together in order for change to occur.

Most feminist researchers believe in the value of empirical research. However, many of them believe that logical positivism has not always been the best way to study women. The most important aspect is asking the appropriate questions, which can then be followed by choosing the best methods. In the 1980s and early 1990s, quantitative survey-based research seemed to be the accepted method for doing leisure research (i.e., at least in North America), and women were largely invisible in this research or were described in relation to sex differences only (Henderson, 1994). As Table 3.1 shows, in the analysis of research on women, qualitative approaches, and especially in-depth interviews, have been the most used in the 30 years of articles reviewed about leisure, women, and gender.

Although qualitative methods are often justified when little is known about a topic, the continued use of these approaches to study women may indicate that qualitative data have ongoing importance in giving individuals *voice* (Henderson *et al.*, 1996) and allowing for reflexivity in the research conducted by women. The diversity of populations investigated requires opportunities for new voices. For example, although not limited to feminist researchers, the use of autoethnography has emerged in the literature about women and leisure (e.g., Raisborough and Bhatti, 2007). As more has been learned about leisure, women, and gender, the nature and quality of experiences has often been more fully explained with the continued use of qualitative data. The approaches and mixing of data in feminist research studies have highlighted the diversity of questions asked as well as the many possible *ways of knowing*. Although qualitative data have been dominant, the utility of quantitative methods for feminist research (e.g., Westmarland, 2001) and in studies of leisure and gender (Shaw, 2010) cannot be underestimated.



Feminist researchers studying leisure have also pointed to the importance of who is writing research and the relationships that they may have to the individuals being studied. For example, many feminist researchers have advocated for changing the terming of those being studied from subjects to participants (Aitchison, 2005). This change in terminology also reflects the desire of feminists to make research a less hierarchical process. The use of the first person in presenting research is another means for representing how research cannot be value free if it is to result in social change as an important tenet of the research. Feminist research epistemology and methodology have also provided the connections between structural explanations and post-structuralist approaches. This openness has also provided a way to examine the broader cultural opportunities in studying leisure, women, and gender.

Epistemology, methodology, and methods related to leisure have been expanded by the contributions of feminist researchers. These contributions have added to the discourse of leisure by emphasizing how the everyday experiences of women and men are described, practised, enacted, perpetuated, and resisted. These contributions have also served to show how the personal and the political cannot be disconnected when examining leisure behaviour.

### ***Leisure behaviour and constraints***

Leisure has been understood in expanded ways because of feminist research, particularly in relation to traditional assumptions about what leisure is and issues surrounding constraints. Both of these areas have sometimes been more the concern of North American researchers than of researchers in other parts of the world (Ravenscroft, 2005). However, the challenges presented by feminists with regard to assumptions about leisure and leisure constraints can be considered.

One idea that is mostly taken for granted today concerns the *definitions* of leisure as the opposite of (paid) work or as unobligated time. The simplicity of defining leisure in either of these ways several decades ago did not reflect the roles of women related to family and household unpaid duties. The paradox of definitions was that either women had no leisure, since none of their time was unobligated, or since some women did not work outside the home, all their time at home was considered free time and, thus, leisure.

This feminist critique of the definitions of leisure was also reflected in describing leisure as recreation or activity. Earlier ideas about activity included largely structured male-defined activities that occurred outside the home, such as sports and outdoor pursuits. Feminists offered that activities could be explained more broadly as they related to everyday home pursuits and social activities. Feminists also reframed how the choice and freedom traditionally associated with leisure were socially constructed. These redefinitions have implications for better understanding leisure as well as for further examining masculinity and gender roles for men.

The study of constraints has benefited from a broader examination of the meanings related to feminist perspectives. Much of the study of women's leisure, at least in the early years, was the study of constraints in various forms (e.g., Glyptis and Chambers, 1982; Henderson, 1990), although the terminology of constraints was not always used. In North America, a major paradigm of research about constraints emerged with empirical models that explained how constraints to leisure worked (Jackson, 2005). Although women's leisure sometimes fitted the models, feminists often questioned whether the models really did include the context of women's lives, and especially the societal structures that were omnipresent. Shaw

and Henderson (2005) described this relationship between gender research and constraints research as an *uneasy alliance*.

Shaw and Henderson (2005) questioned several premises of the constraints models from feminist perspectives. One concern related to the over-reliance on examining individual behaviour without considering structural inequalities that often contributed to perceived and actual constraints. They also described, as did Samdahl and Jekubovich (1997), the value of using qualitative data and grounded approaches in order to better understand the context of people's lives and to contextualize leisure. Feminists such as Samdahl (2005) and Shogan (2002) questioned the definition of constraints that suggested that constraints always resulted in non-participation. These researchers contended that constraints could be positive in how they led to negotiating experiences of leisure in more meaningful ways. Shaw (2001), in particular, pointed out how women's leisure could be associated with resistance. Resistance suggested that acknowledging constraints could lead women to resist structures that impacted on their individual lives, but more importantly, resistance could be applied collectively by women to change society. This view of constraints, coming mainly from feminists, also reinforced the need to examine multiple systems of oppression beyond individual disadvantages, which pointed to the opportunities that globalization and intersectionality provided.

### ***Globalization***

Most feminists have long accepted the idea that as long as any woman is oppressed, all women are oppressed. Therefore, the examination of women in many cultures is necessary if transformations regarding the status of women are to occur anywhere. Henderson and Gibson (2013) noted the growing and continuing focus on gender and leisure in the non-Western countries, and particularly in Middle Eastern and Asian countries. Although some of the conceptual perspectives adopted for studies in the West may be relevant, a *one size fits all* approach will not work in explaining the social structures and values inherent with regard to women and gender in other countries. Just as the exploration of women's leisure resulted in broader perspectives about leisure behaviour and constraints in general, feminist research projects emerging from non-Western countries can help in rethinking traditional assumptions about leisure for both women and men. Leisure is dynamic, and these feminist interpretations from non-Western perspectives can further strengthen the potential value associated with leisure for all people.

The perceived ethnocentricity of leisure (Roberts, 2010) is being addressed globally to some extent by the opening of doors for broader definitions of leisure within cultural contexts. Feminists (e.g., Samdahl, 2010) have pointed out that inequities and globalization must be taken into account and must be more than just recognizing multiple identities and experiences. However, women may not be able to address the influence of gender on leisure until working together as equals enables the recognition of how differences also matter. These analyses will require additional work to examine varying degrees of access to power and resources. Efforts to address the ethnocentricity of leisure and the contributions of global perspectives must come from all leisure researchers in the future.

### ***Professional development***

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge how feminists have also addressed the role of women in the professions related to leisure, recreation, parks, sport, and tourism. This relates indirectly to Leisure Studies but does reflect the practice of management as well as

local and national policies. As noted earlier, the integrative reviews conducted by myself and my colleagues (e.g., Henderson, 1990) excluded research about women in the profession. However, the contributions of feminism to applications in the field of practice are worthy of summary.

In the US, Bialeschki and Henderson (1984) first examined women's personal and professional spheres. At this time, women appeared to be more visible in the leisure services profession, and studying their status was important. A decade later Henderson and Bialeschki (1995) examined women's career development (i.e., job satisfaction, personal and family issues, and equity concerns), based on the work of Frisby (1992). Other research about women as leisure services professionals during the 1990s came from Canada (e.g., Frisby and Brown, 1991), the United Kingdom (UK; e.g., Aitchison *et al.*, 1999), and the US (e.g., Anderson and Shiner, 2001; Shiner and Arnold, 1998).

Examining women included documenting employment representation and the quality of women's experiences in the workplace. For example, Shiner and Arnold's (1998) work in the US showed gender-related obstacles in gaining promotion. Anderson and Shiner (2001) discovered inequity with men in the recreation field in relation to salary, respect from subordinates, and level of participation in management. Aitchison *et al.* (1999) specifically examined perceptions of (in)equity within sport and leisure management in the UK, evaluated practices and policies related to inequity, and suggested necessary steps to assure opportunities for equity in the workforce. Henderson, Grappendorf, Bruton, and Tomas (2013) most recently examined the career development of women who were members of the National Recreation and Park Association. Their research concluded that women were generally satisfied with their jobs, but that senior managers were more satisfied than women in the other levels of employment. All women surveyed rated family/work/leisure balance issues as important. Gender equity issues were identified particularly with regard to ongoing unconscious discrimination. The results from Henderson *et al.* (2013) were compared to the work of Henderson and Bialeschki conducted almost two decades before and showed only small positive changes in women's career development opportunities.

Some of this research focused on the distributive justice of women in the field, but Aitchison (2005) has advocated for a social-cultural nexus consideration related to materiality in the form of organizational structures, organizational cultures, and policies as well as cultural aspects pertaining to women's (and men's) perceptions, attitudes, and appearances. The role of women in the workforce has been explored from numerous perspectives but the contributions offered by feminists to the field of leisure services are important. The situation has been adequately described but future research will need to address strategies for making workplaces friendlier for all individuals, regardless of gender, race, or class.

### ***Intersectionality***

The summary of the research about women and gender since Henderson and Bialeschki's (1995) has continually recognized the differences among women. Women are not a homogeneous group with the same life experiences. Further, feminist researchers have shown how impossible developing any grand theory might be. Although the term 'intersectionality' has rarely been used in the leisure literature, its conceptual presence reflects emerging contributions to exploring the interaction of gender, race, and class as well as other identities such as sexuality and ability. Henderson and Gibson (2013) suggest that this idea of intersectionality may be the next logical stage/phase of feminist research in feminist Leisure Studies.

Intersectionality focuses on interconnections among the multiple dimensions of social categories such as gender, race, age, sexuality, ability, and class. Intersectionality addresses the privilege of dominant groups and emphasizes the limits of current perspectives and classification systems for understanding any human activity such as leisure. Further, intersectionality asserts that forms of oppression such as sexism, racism, classism, colonialism, or homophobia do not act independently of one another, and these interactions contribute further to social inequality and powerlessness. Intersectionality also emphasizes how feminism is a broader project that addresses more than just gender and women. Feminist researchers studying leisure, for example, must take into account racism, imperialism, or any other form of oppression that limits the leisure opportunities of any individual.

McCall (2005) described intersectionality as a major paradigm that can influence research. McCall and others (e.g., Choo and Ferree, 2010; Knudsen, 2007) have also emphasized the complexity of the idea. Henderson and Gibson (2013) uncovered that social inclusion was a theme of the most recent review of published literature about leisure, women, and gender. Knudsen described this acknowledgement of inclusion as *additive* intersectionality, which focuses on the socio-cultural categories but not necessarily their influence on one another. The next step is to also focus on perspectives that emphasize the power implications and the ways in which gender, sexuality, nationality, or any other category might be intersecting. Different social categories not only affect one another, but work together to exert a combined influence on individuals at social, structural, and systemic levels.

Feminist research has set the stage for moving into the acknowledgement and application of intersectionality as an essential epistemology for better understanding leisure. Despite the infancy of operationalizing what intersectionality means, possibilities exist for using the applications and implications of intersectionality in Leisure Studies in critical and reflective ways. This emerging opportunity also complements the way that feminist research has contributed and can further contribute to social justice.

### ***Equity and social justice***

The most significant contribution, and potential for feminist Leisure Studies in the future, to my mind, is the emphasis on social and environmental justice not only for women but for other groups around the world who may not have adequate opportunities for leisure. The feminist agenda calls for a transformation of society, and much needs to be done in relation to broad elements of gender justice.

Feminist researchers are not alone in these concerns related to social justice from a gender perspective. For example, Kivel, Johnson, and Scraton (2009: 489) highlighted ‘the fluidity of identity and identity categories ... that shift the paradigm of how we study race and the leisure experience’. McDonald (2009) described the use of intersectional mapping to challenge how diversity is conceptualized and how whiteness works, and Stewart, Parry, and Glover (2008) described enhancing leisure research to address values and ideologies that can lead to social justice. The application of this type of inclusive thinking will be important in further examining the social context of leisure, developing methods to examine oppression and power, discovering new knowledge, and informing action to address social justice and change. Feminists have worked to illuminate the tension between the recognition of diversity *and* the commonality of experiences (Henderson and Shaw, 2006), which can lead to greater justice and quality of life for all individuals.

## Concluding thoughts

Feminist research since the early 1980s has served as the conscience of Leisure Studies. In analysing leisure, feminists have asked where the women are. The use of critical perspectives has raised questions about why leisure is what it is. Most of the feminist research has described the complexity of leisure behaviour, but has also attempted to recognize how leisure has personal, social, cultural, economic, and political implications in women's and men's lives. This feminist research has helped to open up baseball opportunities for farm girls like me, as well as contributing to the well-being of women and other traditionally powerless groups from global perspectives. Empowerment is a goal of leisure, and feminists have made clear that oppression and exclusion cannot be overlooked.

Feminists, further, have led the way in thinking about how the study of leisure can be more inclusive and how leisure cannot be separated from society. Leisure is in culture and leisure is culture. Feminist researchers were among the first in the leisure field to widely employ qualitative approaches, which are now common in the leisure literature regarding a variety of topics. Feminists have made clear how the study of leisure will always be incomplete and fluid. Although the world is largely postmodern and the possibilities of grand theory are remote, feminists have reminded leisure researchers that structural inequities cannot be ignored. Feminists have not asked anyone to abandon the past completely, but they have implored leisure researchers to add to (and potentially transform) how scholars know about leisure, what is known, and the possibilities for social justice.

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