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**Revisiting Family Leisure Research and Critical Reflections on the Future of
Family-Centred Scholarship**

Abstract

In this special issue we examine the progress made and challenges ahead in research on leisure and families – 20 years revisited. We consider what advancements have been made in family leisure research and potential new directions that family-centred scholars can look towards. We also consider the dominance of particular theoretical perspectives and methodological designs, and the limitations and consequences of such perspectives, to understand the complexities, diversity and richness of the lived family experience. Emphasis is placed on the need for scholarship that explores diverse constructions of family, and also provide a call to action for family-centred scholars to engage with broader global social issues.

Keywords: couple leisure, core and balance model, family leisure, family practices, feminist, methodology, paradigms, purposive leisure, recreation

Revisiting Family Leisure Research and Critical Reflections on the Future of Family-Centred Scholarship

In the mid-1990s, a special issue on "Research on Leisure and Families" (see Freysinger, 1997) significantly influenced family leisure scholarship in North America through the turn of the century. On the 20th anniversary of this special issue it is timely to examine the progress made and challenges ahead in research on families and to extend the discussion to a global context. Over the past 20 years there are a number of social, political, and economic shifts that have played a major role in constraining, enriching, mediating, and altering everyday family interactions and practices. Globalization, economic instability, mass migration, neo-liberal government paradigms, a culture of consumerism, technological advancements, and shifting social policies pertaining to families have characterized the early twenty-first century (Ambert, 2015; Daly, 2001, 2003; Nimrod, 2016).

In this special issue we examine the progress made and challenges ahead in research on leisure and families – 20 years revisited. Contributions include critical reviews and conceptual discussions focused on theoretical developments that challenge researchers to rethink how the interrelationships between families and leisure are conceptualized. Concepts such as expanding understanding of 'family' to include older adults (see Hebblethwaite's paper), missing perspectives of recreation and leisure agencies in family scholarship (see Shannon's paper), and examining the ways in which information communication technology may alter how contemporary families communicate and develop a sense of intimacy (see Sharaievskai's paper) are put forth. Papers by Melton as well as Townsend, Van Puymbroeck and Zabriskie also consider the ways in which social-psychological models have been used to understand families and their leisure experiences and how they may be further developed.

Our introduction to the special issue considers what advancements have been made in family leisure scholarship since 1997 and potential new directions for family-centred scholars in the future. In this paper we consider the progress made through early feminist analysis of family leisure (Henderson, 1990; Shaw, 1997), social-psychological constructs and model development (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, 2003) the recognition of fathering within family leisure (Kay, 2006), the connections with family leisure and social policy (Fullagar, 2003) and the increasing diversity of voices, particularly children and young adults, which are presented within family leisure research (Schänzel & Carr, 2016; Trussell, Xing, & Oswald, 2015). We also consider the dominance of particular theoretical perspectives and methodological designs, and the limitations and consequences of such perspectives, to understand the complexities, diversity and richness of the lived family experience.

In developing this argument, we recognized the necessity to understand the advancement of family leisure research from our respective social geographical locations. That is, family leisure scholarship has evolved from diverse paradigmatic assumptions that reflects the contested state of leisure scholarship in general. Silk, Caudwell, and Gibson (2017) argue that: "Disparate researchers located around the world (some in groups, others in relative isolation) have, for various reasons (some empirical, others theoretical and/or methodological) differentially engaged with 'leisure'" (p. 153). In North America, positivism, post-positivism, experimental designs and surveys, and a social psychological framework that focuses attention on individual experiences has dominated; although this has recently been disrupted by an epistemological 'turn' to critical perspectives that examine the interplay between individuals and society (Samdahl, 2016). In contrast, in the UK and other European countries, leisure scholarship emerged from critical macro social theories including Marxism and Feminism. More recently, post-structural analyses

that explore how particular discourses shape family life and family leisure have flourished (Fullagar, 2009). Coalter (1997) refers to this as a distinction between leisure sciences and leisure studies. We begin this paper by examining scholarship in North America, followed by global perspectives (UK, Australia, and New Zealand) as well as some discussion of the Global South. The paper will conclude by examining what family leisure scholarship still has to offer. We focus on the need for scholarship that explores diverse constructions of family, and also look at the potential of family leisure scholarship to engage with broader global social issues.

Paradigmatic and Theoretical Duality in North American Scholarship

Families, for many people, provide the primary context for their leisure, and yet, until the end of the twentieth century, family leisure was a relatively neglected area of research within North American leisure studies (Kelly, 1997; Shaw, 1997). This lack of attention was due, in part, to the belief that “leisure was best explained from its relation to work” (Kelly, 1997, p. 132), the prominence of social psychological models that focused on individual experiences and patterns of behavior (Shaw, 1997), and an emphasis on couples and marital leisure patterns without consideration of other family forms or the broader family system (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). Moreover, early research on family leisure focused primarily on the benefits of family activities (Shaw, 2008), and although this research provided an important beginning, it did not reflect the reality of lived experiences that includes both positive and negative attributes. As Kelly (1997) argued, “In family there is both community and alienation. In relationships there is bonding and violence. In nurture there is both love and exploitation. Consequently, we should avoid any simple models or assumptions” (p. 134).

While providing a critical commentary, Shaw (1997) observed theoretical duality in the family leisure field and conflicting theoretical paradigms that were employed by researchers. Shaw identified the two theoretical paradigms as a social-psychological approach and a sociological-feminist approach. The dominant social-psychological paradigm mirrors North American leisure scholarship more broadly and through a micro-level perspective, “focuses on interactions in the family, and on the positive benefits of leisure for improved relationships and communication among family members” (p. 100-101). An underlying assumption seems to be that family leisure is a mutually positive and beneficial experience for all family members, negating the potential multiplicity of meanings and experiences that might occur. In contrast, the sociological-feminist approach locates the family within the broader patriarchal system and seeks to understand how “societal gender relations affect the expression and experience of leisure within the family” (p. 101). Within this macro-level perspective, Shaw argued, primary emphasis is placed on the interplay of individual family members and broader society, and applies a cultural analysis of the impact of societal structures and dominant ideologies to family relationships and activities. Research in this tradition has been undertaken through feminist theory or other critical theoretical approaches. For a detailed analysis of these two theoretical paradigms and the types of theoretical frameworks that inform this research refer to Shaw (1997). Since this critical review we have seen the continuation and advancement of theoretical duality in the family leisure field.

Over the past 20 years, research by feminist and constructivist theoretical perspectives has provided evidence that women remain responsible for the organization and production of everyday family vacations, holidays, birthday, and Christmas celebrations (see Shaw, 2008). As Hilbrecht (2013) ascertained, patterns of time use indicate that this is largely connected to

mothers' time as closely linked to the needs of others. In part, the idealization, motivation, and expectations for family leisure activities is connected to broader cultural ideologies such as intensive mothering and involved fathering¹ that are framed by gender-related power differentials (see Shaw, 2008, 2010). Moreover, parenting is no longer a 'private' or 'domestic' act: "parenting goes beyond the home environment and becomes a public act that is observed by other parents, with these observations creating the bases of what is deemed to be a good parent" (Trussell & Shaw, 2012, p. 377). Other research has investigated the role of technologically mediated leisure (see Parry, Glover & Mulcahy, 2013) and has demonstrated that shifting identities (e.g. new motherhood) are experienced within online and physical communities. Thus, rather than conceptualizing the family unit in isolation, feminist and constructivist scholars in North America have advanced the idea that family-centred activities are experienced within a community of families characterized by support as well as public censure.

The idea that family leisure should be seen as purposive leisure, rather than pure, or freely chosen leisure was put forth by Shaw and Dawson (2001). They argued that the social-psychological definitions of leisure as freedom of choice, intrinsic motivation, and the quality of enjoyment or experiences might not always be applicable to family leisure activities due to their obligatory nature. In light of the existing definitional shortcomings, Shaw and Dawson (2001) posited that family leisure "should be seen as a form of purposive leisure, which is planned, facilitated, and executed by parents in order to achieve particular short- and long-term goals" (p. 228). Since this seminal paper, several family scholars who use a feminist or constructivist

¹ Fathers' shared leisure activities with their children may provide a context in which they can fulfill new involved fatherhood cultural expectations without challenging dominant masculine discourses (see Coakley, 2009; Gavanas, 2003). This idea, however, has come under criticism as privileging men who claim to share parenting responsibilities "being with" their children, while mothers continue to "be there" for their children in more domestic work related contexts that have extended into the public sphere (see Such, 2009; Trussell & Shaw, 2012).

theoretical perspective have advanced the conceptualization of purposive leisure to a variety of family contexts such as time spent with grandparents (see Hebblethwaite & Norris, 2010) and mothers' roles as leisure educators (see Shannon & Shaw, 2008).

Research on families has largely held the assumption that 'family' is based on adults with children. Research has emphasized divergent perspectives in relation to families that have children and the implications of families facing different forms of adversity. For example, Mactavish and Schleien (2004) reported that parents with a child who has a developmental disability valued family leisure interactions as beneficial for enhancing quality of family life and the development of life-long skills, and yet, family leisure was particularly valued for the child with the disability as they had fewer opportunities for leisure engagements outside of the family unit. The roles of leisure for women whose partner was deployed on military missions during a time of war was revealed to be all that more valuable to meet the needs for distraction and enjoyment as well as bring a sense of control (Werner & Shannon, 2013). Hutchinson, Afifi, and Krause (2007) reported that shared family time following divorce, provided much-needed humor and distractions as a way to cope and diffuse immediate and enduring stress. Deliberate efforts were made by parents to create new special family events and memories and (re)create a sense of being a family.

The interdisciplinary nature of feminist and constructivist analysis of family leisure has resulted in research that explores the diversity and complexities of family life. The focus of such studies on capturing the nuances and differences within families has meant that such scholarship has not always been published within leisure outlets. Instead, literature relevant to family leisure can be found within the fields of family studies, childhood sociology or public policy and therefore is not always captured within reviews of family leisure. The broad array of topics,

methodologies (particularly qualitative methods) and findings captured within research utilising feminist and constructivist analyses similarly does not lend itself well to traditionally synthesised literature reviews.

Another dominant perspective of family research, originating from a seminal study by Zabriskie and McCormick (2001), has influenced a line of inquiry focused on the Core and Balance Model (CBM) of Family Leisure Functioning. This model, grounded in family systems theory and a benefits framework, posits that there are two general patterns or interrelated basic categories of family leisure involvement that families participate in to meet family functioning and wellness (Hodge et al., 2015; Ward, Barney, Lundberg & Zabriskie, 2014). According to the model, core activities "address a family's need for familiarity and stability by regularly providing predictable family leisure experiences that foster personal relatedness and feelings of family closeness" (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 283). "Balance family leisure patterns address a family's need for novelty and change by providing new experiences that provide the input necessary for family systems to be challenged, to develop, and to progress as a working unit" (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 283). Balance activities are less frequent than core activities, require greater investment of resources (e.g., time, effort, and money), involve substantial planning and organization, and usually occur outside of the home (e.g., family vacations, special events, day trips). Zabriskie and McCormick contend that both forms of activities are essential to foster feelings of cohesion and adaptability for families.

Over the past 20 years, a group of family leisure scholars predominantly from the United States have used the CBM. Within this benefits perspective, different forms of family samples were examined such as adoptive families (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003), single-parent families (Hornberger, Zabriskie, & Freeman, 2010), and couple leisure (Ward et al., 2014). Family leisure

has also been positively related to family life satisfaction (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). As Agate et al. (2009) reported: "the satisfaction with their leisure involvement is clearly the best predictor of overall satisfaction with family life, even when accounting for family income, marital status, age, history of divorce, and family leisure involvement" (p. 218). In an integrated review, Hodge et al. (2015) pointed out that: "It is important to note application of the model has been primarily limited to populations in the United States, and consistent recommendations among scholars using this framework include calls for more international studies (including English and non-English speaking countries) and to use additional analyses including nested or hierarchical approaches" (p. 585). Moreover, the Family Leisure Activity Profile which was designed to measure involvement in family leisure activity patterns based on the CBM, was recently reviewed and critiqued with recommendations for its improvement (see Melton, Ellis, & Zabriskie, 2016).

Scholarship drawing on this line of inquiry has been informed by other perspectives such as purposive leisure (Shaw & Dawson, 2001), particularly the benefits' aspects of purposive leisure. However, we argue that for the most part it has remained somewhat insular in its conceptualization and development when considering the richness of family leisure scholarship that has been constructed using diverse theoretical perspectives in North America and beyond. Existing models about 'successful' family functioning may inadvertently pathologize certain family forms such as single parent families. We also wonder how well the CBM reflects the complexities of families' lives in relation to broader social issues as indicated in the opening paragraph of this paper. Indeed, two articles in this special issue (see Melton as well as Townsend et al.) examine aspects of the CBM, and provide alternate suggestions of how to advance its use for future research.

As a whole, problematically, North American scholarship has largely continued to examine family leisure within heteronormative structures (two heterosexual parents and school-aged children), despite Shaw's (1997) call for inclusive research that takes into account the question of diversity among families. Single-parent families, blended or non-custodial families, families of diverse incomes, and diverse sexual identities have received minimal attention. Recent scholarship suggests that research should include extended family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins in the analysis for a more holistic understanding of family leisure experiences (Hebblethwaite & Norris, 2010; Havitz 2007; Hilbrecht et al., 2008; Trussell et al., 2015). Moreover, the assumption that family research is based on adults with children remains highly problematic as well as the lack of recognition of diverse types of unions² including cohabitation or 'living apart together' wherein partners maintain separate residences.

While considering the last 20 years of family leisure scholarship in North America, and the theoretical dualism that for the most part remains in place, we return to the work of Freysinger (1997). As Freysinger pointed out then, "how we think about and what we know about leisure and families" is historically situated in select cultural contexts and "our definitions or conceptualizations of family and leisure are constantly being reconstructed" (p. 3). Definitions and models of family leisure provide shared understanding and communication. Shifting conceptualizations of families and their leisure involvement invite possibilities for innovative, conceptual frameworks and new research relationships. In light of this, we call to question how future North American scholarship may better draw upon diverse theoretical perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of family leisure experiences within the context of broader social issues. In doing so, our perspective is underscored by the imperative for North

² See, for example, Ambert (2015) for a typology of families and unions.

American family leisure scholarship to be relevant and integrated into global scholarly discourses and practices and to reflect the various family structures that exist in North America.

Global Perspectives on Family Leisure Scholarship

McCabe (2015) suggests, "Family life, and specifically the practices that make up leisure within the context of family life, is subject to powerful social norms and regulation at the micro level of individual family 'units' and the macro level of society, government and the media" (p.175). The focus on both the macro and micro influences of family leisure has been a central theme running through much of the international scholarship within this area. Studies have generally drawn on theories and perspectives from critical sociology and social policy to move beyond micro explanations of family leisure and its influence on family dynamics. Feminist theory (see Fullagar, 2003; Kay 1998, 2000), critical theory (see Harrington, 2015) post-structuralism (see Fullagar, 2009) and family sociology (see Such, 2006) have provided scholars with the conceptual tools to explore the tensions family members encounter negotiating leisure and how these reflect particular moral, social and cultural discourses that shape Global North societies.

Within the UK, Tess Kay has been instrumental in driving forward conceptual and theoretical understanding of family leisure particularly through encouraging analysis of social policy and its relationship with family leisure engagement. In placing social policy at the center of exploring family leisure behavior, Kay has extended the important critical work feminist scholars established in the 1980s and 1990s within both North American and international scholarship (see Green, Hebron & Woodward, 1990; Henderson et al, 1989). Kay (2000) has illuminated the value Global North family related social policy continues to place on the

'traditional' family despite the movement of women into the workforce making such family structures difficult to sustain. Kay highlighted that despite increasing numbers of women entering the workforce they struggle to renegotiate the assumption that policy holds of them as "primary providers of unpaid caring and domestic work in the home" (p. 263). This in turn has a profound influence on women's ability to negotiate leisure time. Liz Such's work (2001; 2009) has similarly extended this knowledge through her analysis of leisure amongst dual earner households. Her work has further enhanced initial critical feminist analyses by drawing on the perspectives of both men and women in relationships to highlight the persistent and ongoing inequities in leisure access between them. Through detailed interviews, Such illustrates the ways in which both men and women recognize these inequities but rarely challenge them.

In an Australian context Simone Fullagar has continued to explore family leisure through the lens of critical sociology, post-structuralism, and social policy. Her work is particularly valuable for understanding how policy governs family leisure behaviour and what parents perceive are appropriate family leisure activities. In doing so, she problematizes the notion of choice within leisure, instead illustrating the profound influence particular type of social policies can have on influencing leisure decisions within families. For example, Fullagar (2003; 2009) demonstrates how Australian policies, institutions and popular culture perpetuate a damaging range of healthy living and obesity related discourses that shape how parents interpret particular leisure practices. She highlights how notions of risk play a key role in influencing parents' family leisure choices. Utilizing a gendered lens, she illustrates the particular pressure placed on mothers to be "moral gatekeepers of family health and leisure consumption" (p. 11).

A further significant contribution of Kay has been the introduction of the father to family leisure analysis. Feminist analyses have provided an important platform for exposing the nuances

and tensions within women's experiences of family leisure, demonstrating the struggles some women face in negotiating leisure time for themselves amongst family responsibilities. However, the father has been largely absent within these debates. Kay's editorial of a special issue of *Leisure Studies* in 2006 and subsequent edited volume *Fathering through Sport and Leisure* in 2009 resulted in a range of analyses considering how leisure fits within contemporary ideals of the involved father. Studies within these collections have illustrated that leisure is a significant site for fathering but also demonstrated some of the tensions that emerge from using leisure sites to 'over' father, and the impact this has on father child relationships (Jeanes & Magee, 2011; Willms, 2009).

Analyses informed by critical sociological and social policy have also played a key role in illustrating the lack of children's voices within family leisure research. As several scholars have highlighted, until recently children and young people's voices have been largely absent within family leisure research, particularly detailed qualitative commentary of how children experience family leisure and its position within family life (Jeanes, 2010). Where children's experiences have been discussed this information was frequently collected via parents' perspectives. The growing recognition within family leisure scholarship of children's centrality was driven in part by the emergence of the sociology of childhood within the UK and Europe (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998). Childhood sociology scholars have provided leisure researchers with a framework for acknowledging and understanding children's agency and rights (James & Prout, 2015). They have also strongly advocated for appropriate methodology that enables young people to express their views and opinions as part of the research process (Christensen & James, 2008).

Social policy and family sociology have led the way conceptually and methodologically; centering children's voices within family research. The previous five years in particular have witnessed increasing prominence of children within family leisure analysis. The importance and scope of children's voice is highlighted by the recent special issues of *Annals of Leisure Research Children, Families and Leisure* which contained 18 articles across 3 issues of the journal. Several of the papers draw on participatory or narrative methods that allow children to be active participants in the research process and active contributors to knowledge. As Schänzel and Carr (2016) suggest, the collection of papers illustrates that family leisure scholars have "become more sophisticated in our approaches to knowledge production" (p. 172). Similar to the critical feminist analysis that drove family leisure forward in the 1990s, the focus on children's perspectives within family leisure dialogue has offered more complete and coherent understandings as well as overcoming methodological boundaries.

The perspectives of children across a variety of leisure contexts, including, but not limited to, tourism, sport and play have assisted with again debunking the myth that family leisure is always pleasurable for family members. Children's voices have helped to illustrate some of the obligations and tensions they feel towards family life that emerge within a leisure context. For example, whilst a central theme emerging from the contributors of *Fathering through Leisure* is the role leisure plays in fathering, Willms (2009) in her analysis of father involvement in their daughters' tennis participation highlights how many young women found the relationship to be controlling, impacting negatively on their relationships with their fathers. In their study of young people with a disability and families, Jeanes and Magee (2012) revealed that children are often very aware of some of the problems parents encounter facilitating family

leisure. Young people with disabilities in particular felt guilty about the constraints they felt they placed on family leisure and the stress it created for parents seeking to negotiate this.

As Schänzel and Carr (2016) similarly conclude, whilst there has been considerable ground made theoretically, methodologically and empirically through bringing children into family leisure research, there continues to be a range of under-researched topics. As with family leisure more broadly, capturing and understanding experiences of children within diverse family structures and systems remains a priority. Most analyses focus on the viewpoints of children within two parent, white, middle class families. Very little is known about how children experience and value family leisure in non-traditional and diverse families. Similarly, the work of Fullagar aside, family leisure as yet has done little to engage with wider issues and debates influencing childhood particularly within the health sector. Families have generally been lambasted within the obesity debate and held responsible for the ‘problem’ of childhood obesity, providing fertile areas for family leisure scholarship that could consider family leisure and its position within broader health discourses.

The leisure field generally and family leisure in particular has been dominated by knowledge emanating from Global North scholarship. As such, the nuance and differences of Global South family structures and the role of leisure within this has yet to be fully explored. Studies examining Global South contexts suggest families are often larger and are governed by different values and norms, particularly in relation to gender. McHale, Dinh and Rao (2014) in their discussion of transition and change amongst Eastern and Southeast Asian families highlight that family planning policies, modernization and increasing engagement with Northern values such as individualism have disrupted traditional family structures, requiring more women to

enter the workforce, increasing demands for child care and rising costs of housing. However, traditional cultural elements of family structure remain,

Grandparents, especially grandfathers, are revered, husbands possess more power than wives, sons have more privileges than daughters, and the eldest son is the family's most important child.....A large proportion of newly married couples do not leave their parental home immediately after marriage and with most couples still desiring to have a first baby as soon as possible, three generation family households are normative. The family as a whole and its social status take precedence over the identity and needs of individual family members. (p.164)

The connections between traditional norms, changing societies, and government policies provides a productive backdrop for leisure studies that examine their relationship with families and the time they spend together.

Within African family studies a prominent discourse emerging is that of the 'family in crises'. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has decimated family structures within some countries, particularly affecting middle age populations. Young people are increasingly responsible for younger siblings in collaboration with extended family. In such circumstances leisure might seem irrelevant, but as studies within sport for development have shown, leisure based activities can have a central role in creating alternative family structure for young people (Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Mwaanga & Prince, 2016). Such studies, utilizing detailed qualitative ethnographies provide a valuable counter narrative to the crisis discourse.

Looking Forward to Family-Centred Scholarship

Family leisure scholarship has taken us far over the past 20 years. We have broadened the field, developed greater sophistication theoretically and methodologically (Carr & Schänzel, 2015; Schänzel & Carr, 2015), and moved away from normative conceptions of the family. Yet stepping back, it is helpful to critically assess where the field can develop further and where we have not perhaps made the impact for which we had hoped. We outline key aspects that, from our perspective, should be addressed.

i. Theoretical Diversification and Integration

In 1997, Shaw argued that “the controversies surrounding family leisure research are due primarily to conflicting theoretical paradigms employed by researchers, reflecting different basic assumptions about the family and about gender relations in society” (p. 98). Shaw identified the theoretical paradigms as a social-psychological paradigm and a sociological-feminist paradigm. In her call she challenged researchers to consider conceptualizing family leisure as inherently contradictory, “for more inclusive theorizing in which the insights of both paradigmatic approaches can be incorporated” (p. 98) and to deter “paradigmatic determinism, in which attention is paid to only one side (whether positive or negative) of family leisure” (p. 109). Unfortunately, we are troubled that this tension remains 20 years later.

Reflecting the realities of everyday family life, family is "inherently contradictory" (Shaw, 1997, p. 106) and necessarily defies absolute definition across time and space. As it did then, this requires family leisure scholarship to embrace contradictions, tensions, and inequities in the ideologies and practices of families, highlighting how family leisure can liberate and constrain, enhance functioning and encourage breakdown, represent togetherness and isolation and loneliness. Examinations of leisure from a family perspective has a strong tradition of adopting, adapting and synthesising theory. Family leisure research and the theories used

continue to diversify as demonstrated by recent examples of the exploration of family holidays and – outside of the family leisure sphere, but closely aligned – family food and eating practices (Backer & Schanzel 2013; Bertella 2015; Hall & Holdsworth, 2016; Hilbrecht et al., 2008; James et al., 2009; Punch et al., 2010).

While we have stepped long this path, there is further to go, particularly with drawing on diverse methodological approaches and theories to deepen our understanding of family leisure. It will also require family leisure scholars to recognize and integrate diverse epistemological perspectives and the growing sophistication of paradigmatic choices. As Parry, Johnson and Stewart (2013) point out:

Looking forward, paradigmatic choices will continue to flourish as scholars blur boundaries, define and redefine themselves, and discover multiple entry points into the understandings of the experiences of humans and nature. There should be little doubt that the inquiry into leisure will provide increasingly nuanced and complex impacts on social life and the way it is understood. (p. 85)

Theoretical diversification and integration is both feasible and desirable. It would represent interdisciplinary progress between leisure studies and leisure sciences and help consolidate the position of family leisure as a field. To be clear, in making a call for theoretical diversification and integration we are not interested in a neatly defined, fixed and bounded focus for family leisure scholarship. Rather, we believe that it is through diverse ways of knowing that our understanding of family-centred meanings and experiences will be advanced. Moreover, it is when scholars draw upon and learn from diverse paradigmatic and methodological choices different from their own wherein this potential lies.

We commend family leisure scholars who have published their work in non-leisure journals and sought out collaborative projects with research teams in other fields. In part, this may underscore the inherent value of interdisciplinary research that has received increased attention among funding agencies and university administrators to solve complex problems and integrate knowledge that individual disciplines cannot solve alone (Anders & Lester, 2014; Groen & Hyland-Russell, 2016; Jacobs & Frickel, 2009). It may also be a consequence of "an increasingly corporatised/neoliberal higher education (HE) system that has decimated leisure/recreation departments and programmes" (Silk, Caudwell, & Gibson, 2017, p. 153). Regardless of the motivation, it addresses the issues of leisure studies "intellectual isolation" (Shaw, 2000, p. 150) and the "insular interiority to leisure studies" (Dustin, Schwab, & Bricker, 2016, p. 356). We encourage family-centred leisure scholars to continue to extend their work and engage in interdisciplinary research in order to reflect and even restructure a changing social life. Our call to action also aligns with recent calls by managing editors of *Leisure Studies* (see Silk, Caudwell, & Gibson, 2017) and the current editors of *Leisure Sciences* (see Johnson & Parry, 2013) in the need for theoretically informed work that is of social relevance and that clearly identifies paradigmatic assumptions.

However, as scholars have developed research programmes to deeply engage with more complex social issues or situational contexts, their work and scholarly identity may not necessarily be entitled 'family leisure', yet it is clear that the scholarship is family-centred (e.g., within the context of digital technologies, public health, motherhood, obesity, physically active leisure, tourism, sport). It is an additional challenge therefore to promote the historical strength, future potential, empirical and theoretical richness and external influence of family leisure research to the Academy and beyond. As such, we suggest that leisure scholars who are

interested in family-centred scholarship should be intentional in using strategies such as keyword choices (e.g., family, family leisure) to help consolidate and help others find their research. It is also imperative that as family leisure scholarship develops theoretically and seeks to transcend interdisciplinary boundaries through research collaborations, future literature reviews, definitions, model development and analyses of family leisure scholarship, it would do well to move beyond simplistic and myopic assumptions of what constitutes and is framed as family leisure. That is, traditional synthesised literature reviews may not lend itself well to reflect the breadth and depth of family-centred scholarship; yet promising and unexplored opportunities exist with meta-ethnography and/or participatory narrative reviews.

ii. Understanding Diverse Social Perspectives

Some of the papers in this special issue recognize the complexity in defining the construct of 'family'. However, despite the advancements that have been made over the past two decades in understanding families and their leisure involvement, the research represents only a beginning in understanding the rich complexities and divergent meanings and experiences between family members as well as among diverse family forms. For example, as Freysinger (1997) argued 20 years ago, "What of leisure and families of older adults who soon will comprise the largest proportion of households in North America?" (p. 2). As Hebblethwaite in this special issue makes clear, Freysinger's call remains largely unanswered. To this end, we argue and are troubled that Shaw's (1997) claims that "the implicit assumptions seems to be that the concept of family leisure is applicable only to families with children" (p. 99) still remains deeply entrenched in the current family leisure scholarship.

Further questions arise when social class, ethnicity, race, and sexual identity becomes the central context for investigation and the concept of intersectionality remains largely ignored within family leisure scholarship. With an increasingly diverse culture, attention should be given to multigenerational households (see Tirone & Shaw, 1997), intercultural committed relationships (see Sharaievska et al., 2013), and diverse sexual identities (see Bialeschki & Pearce, 1997) among other diverse perspectives, to examine how these perspectives might alter the meanings, experiences, and context of family leisure activities. Moreover, attention to indigenous families remains largely unexplored and it is critical that future research seeks to understand the context of their leisure experiences and potential insights for social policy development and implementation particularly in a time of reconciliation.

The proliferation of poverty and homelessness and the change of social support programs from welfare to work programs, has shifted the onus of responsibility from social institutions to individual citizens and families (Chouinard & Crooks, 2005; Coulter, 2009; Gazso, 2007). Despite the growing prevalence of these social contexts, relatively little research to date in family scholarship (particularly within North America) has focused on neoliberal governance, public policy and the implications on families' lives. Moreover, given the recent mass global (im)migration of families that transcends borders due to conflict, persecution, and a desire for inclusion and social justice, we are reminded that these issues affect not only families whose lives are in a state of flux, but also the everyday experiences of all families as media consumers and citizens within a particular socio-political discourse brought into the family home.

Clearly, it will be important in future research and professional practice to give consideration to the multiple family forms that co-exist and the broader social issues that frame families' lives for a more inclusive and diverse conceptualization of family and leisure

experiences. As Werner and Shannon (2013) write, "there is value in continuing to explore the role and meaning of family leisure in different family structures and with families experiencing different circumstance" (p. 76). Moreover, shifting conceptualizations of family units and their leisure involvement that examines their similarities, the divergences among families, as well as the connection to broader social issues is needed if leisure research is to be socially relevant.

iii. Applying and Mobilising Knowledge

It is important that family leisure scholarship reflects on with whom our work has been impactful. This is critically interwoven with whom we wish to influence. Social psychological research around family functioning may, for example, wish to impact on the practices of family therapists and recreational therapy practitioners (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003). Sociological and social policy specialists may seek to influence policy decision-makers across a broad range of fields (for example, sport policy, health policy, labour market policy). To retain the cohesive strength of the field it is important to mobilise our strong and diverse knowledge base to pressing social issues and trends such as growing inequality; technologicalisation; digitisation; individualisation; ageing populations and care; migration and political disaffection by promoting the 'family lens'. This is more challenging in some policy and practice domains than others. For example, family leisure research has great relevance to public health challenges in the Global North such as the rise in obesity and the decline in physical activity. Public health research in these areas is, however, dominated by individualised, behaviour-change oriented interventions and theory across disciplines is poorly integrated (King, 2015). The contribution of a family perspective is clear and family-based interventions are in evidence (Sacher et al., 2010; West et al., 2010); it is incumbent upon family leisure scholarship to help improve the efficacy of

interventions by providing a deeper appreciation of how physical (in)activity, for example, operates within the context of the broader leisure setting within families. Means of doing this include ensuring cross-disciplinary engagement, partnerships with decision-makers and third sector organisations who deliver public health programmes.

iv. Critical Appraisal of Policy and Practice through a Family Lens

Family leisure scholarship provides some good examples of how social and policy problems can be viewed differently if explored through a critical family lens. Harrington and Fullager (2013) provide an excellent appraisal of the pitfalls of a choice-driven, individualized policy and practitioner framework for "being active and living well" (p. 1). Using sociological theories of risk in a neo-liberal context, they highlight how individualization bypasses social determinants that shape the opportunities and constraints to leisure for marginalised families. Their work highlights how practitioners at different levels of government assess and apply the 'healthism' imperative and how individualization, marketisation and a narrow (middle class) definition of family combined to exclude more marginalised families (such as low-income; migrant and families with children with special needs). They call for the development of localised 'communities of practice' in the sport and recreation sphere to enable the development of a different knowledge of choice, constraint and health. The inclusion of a diverse range of families from different backgrounds would facilitate this.

Such's (2015) exploration of the sport and physical activity legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games was also viewed through a family lens. Using the narratives of children and young people, the study showed how families consumed the games together and how this informed family discussion and short-term physical activity practices within the family.

Demonstrations of tensions, power dynamics and reciprocity were revealed in the negotiation of physical activity in a family context that had implications for the framing, design, development and delivery of physical activity mega-event legacy policies.

Both these studies and several of the papers in this special issue (see Hebblethwaite; Shannon) highlight the need to challenge dominant leisure-related policy orthodoxies that fail to critically engage with the lived realities of family life. Although not a straightforward task, improved conceptualisations of family leisure practices and models of mechanisms and processes (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, 2003; Such 2015) can enhance the capability of family leisure scholarship to inform policy agendas.

Concluding Thoughts

The challenges identified in this paper align within recent other consolidations of the family leisure sphere (see Carr & Schänzel, 2015; Schänzel & Carr, 2015) and many of the original challenges outlined in 1997 remain: parity of esteem for all family forms and phases; criticality in the field versus consensus building and a movement beyond a focus on the Global North. Moreover, given the recent dramatic shifts in governance and divisive politics, and considerable dialogue and debate around issues pertaining to human rights, inclusion, and social justice that have infused fear, anger, change, and protest there is no better time to try to understand the impacts of these broader social issues on family life as well as to consider how they might be addressed.

We argue, to advance family-centred scholarship research practices must continue to reflect changing historical, social, cultural and spatial contexts. Leisure research should be relevant, facilitate social change, and enhance the quality of individual, family, and community

life (Shaw, 2000). We are hopeful that future research will answer this call, as examining family leisure within the context of larger social issues carries the potential for personal and collective transformation. There is much work to be done as families are always in a state of becoming.

Finally, researchers must continually rework conceptualizations and search for new methodologies to reflect and even re-structure a changing social life. We posit that the future of family-centred scholarship requires learning from diverse paradigmatic frameworks to forge new research relationships within North America as well as transcending continental borders and disciplinary boundaries. When we developed our call for papers, we hoped it would present an opportunity to bring together scholars who were interested in leisure and family scholarship in new and different ways. In our view, this collection of papers represents a step towards addressing a perceived crisis of fragmentation (or pluralism) in the field of leisure studies (Henderson, 2010) and family leisure scholarship that may be embedded within other disciplines. It is our hope this dialogue will continue as we seek to deepen our understanding of one of the most basic structures of social organization, the family unit.

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