

Researching Diverse Populations

Karla A. Henderson, Professor and Chair
Curriculum in Leisure Studies and Recreation Administration,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The purpose of this article is to share some of the current literature, as well as my personal experiences, about researching diverse populations. In doing research, sometimes I was a member of the dominant social system and at other times, I was a member of the "diverse" group being researched. My aim is to help other researchers understand the value and become more sensitive about researching diverse populations. I address four broad issues: being a member of the researched group, choosing methods and strategies, involving diverse groups in the research, and how researching diverse groups might change the researcher. None of these issues has clear-cut and easy answers. In raising some questions, I hope that leisure researchers can continue a dialogue about how to avoid being exclusionary in research and in practice. I refer to a variety of groups considered diverse and assume possible applications from one group to another. I conclude that regardless of whether or not we personally conduct research about diversity, we can all be allies in helping to get diversity research into our literature to improve the quality of life for all individuals.

KEYWORDS: *Diversity, multiculturalism, research, methods, self-reflection, leisure, culture, social systems*

Recently my colleagues and I published an article examining the leisure of women with disabilities (Henderson, Bedini, Hecht, & Schuler, 1995). In a published comment about the article several months later, Smears (1996) stated:

If the interpretive paradigm is the basis of the research then the links between how epistemology informs methodology in qualitative research might be explored. For example, the qualitative methods applied give little indication of the relationships between the researcher and the researched. Just as there are issues about whether men can adequately interview women...there are questions around the significance of non-disabled researchers (however empathetic) interviewing disabled women (p. 80).

The point made by Smears was well taken, but I was perplexed by questions about how research ought to be done if the researcher was, or was not, a member of the studied group. In almost all areas of the social sciences, including leisure research, the 1990s has heralded an awareness of diversity

Thanks are extended to the Chapel Hill Women's Nonfiction Writing Group, Deb Bialeschki and Norman Bryan from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Leandra Bedini from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for reviewing the first draft of this paper. The author may be contacted at: CB #3185 Evergreen, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3185, phone 919-962-1222, Fax 919-962-1223, email: karla@email.unc.edu

in our society. An acknowledgment of these diverse populations, however, has not compensated for the lack of research. Because few studies have targeted specific diverse groups, the current instruments may not accurately assess the leisure behaviors of some individuals. I discovered, however, that a number of researchers have begun to do research on diverse groups (e.g., Carr & Williams, 1993; Floyd, Shinew, McGuire, & Noe, 1994; Henderson, Winn, & Roberts, 1996; MacKay, 1996; Roberts & Drogin, 1993; Silverberg, Backman, & Backman, 1996; as well as many others who have studied people with disabilities) and are seeking strategies for how to do it best (e.g., Allison, 1988; Hutchinson, 1988; Jacobson, Yaffe, & Sheldon, 1995). As I tried to better understand the arguments about whether or not a researcher ought to be a member of the group researched, I came upon other issues about researching diverse populations that were relevant.

Diverse populations are defined as people in the non-dominant social system who have been traditionally underresearched and underserved. Examples of groups might include women, people of color, people with disabilities, low income people, gays and lesbians, older adults, people for whom English is not their first language, high risk youth, and others. Not all these groups have a uniqueness that makes gathering data different from dominant groups in society, but leisure researchers might do a better job of including these groups and designing research strategies if potential differences and uniquenesses are considered.

The definition of diverse is somewhat problematic. For example, we have inadequate constructs of race and ethnicity (Hutchinson, 1988). Further, such groups as white women might be a part of the dominant social system as might older men even though they also represent aspects of the non-dominant system. In addition, even among diverse or traditionally defined minority groups, a great deal of diversity exists making generalizations within groups, let alone across groups, difficult. Nevertheless, I use the term diverse populations in this paper to describe groups in our society that have often been considered out of the mainstream or "special" because of the uniqueness of their social, cultural, and historical experiences.

My own interest in the subject of researching diverse populations has been emerging for a number of years as I've addressed the invisibility of women in research on leisure behavior. For example, by going beyond the concept of biological sex as the only defining characteristic between men and women, most feminist researchers acknowledge the need to illuminate the possible differences and historical-cultural specificity among women. Just as feminists have been critical of the patriarchy for not acknowledging the contributions of women, we can also be critical of how women studying women sometimes have ignored diversity issues (hooks, 1989). The absence of reference to culture and ethnicity, as well as other visible and invisible characteristics of diversity, supports a social structure of exclusion and inequality. Recent trends in feminist theorizing about difference are grounded in actual differences among women. These trends illustrate how theories of "the woman" can be replaced with theories of multiplicity (Mascia-Lees,

Sharpe, & Cohen, 1989). That challenge seems to exist in studying other previously invisible groups whether done from a feminist or some other perspective.

Most recently, my interest and questions about researching "diverse" groups have emerged from studying physical activity in African-American and Native American women. Recognizing the possibilities of difference between my colleagues and me as white researchers and the populations that we wanted to study, and trying to take to heart what Smears (1996) suggested, have resulted in a quest to understand how to research diverse and previously underresearched groups. As we began the study of physical activity we discovered through literature and talking to potential subject participants that "textbook" methods of research may not work for some populations.

The purpose of this article is to share some of the current literature, as well as my personal experience in doing research as a member of the dominant social system (e.g., white, professionally employed, able-bodied, baby boomer) and a non-dominant member (e.g., female, lesbian), in hopes of helping others become more sensitive to researching diverse populations. My exploration is also raising questions about why this research should be done and how it should be undertaken. After an initial discussion about the value of researching diverse populations, I will address four broad issues:

1. Being a member of the researched group;
2. Choosing methods and strategies;
3. Involving diverse groups in the research;
4. How researching diverse groups might change the researcher.

None of these issues has clear-cut and easy answers. In raising some questions, I hope that leisure researchers can continue a dialogue about how to avoid being exclusionary.

Why Research Diverse Populations

Doing research gives us information, theory, or insights into human behavior that will improve people's quality of life. We also hope that our research will have a larger impact on ways of thinking about a topic or a problem. For example, although some leisure researchers have argued that feminism has influenced the ways of thinking about traditional topics such as leisure (e.g., Henderson & Bialeschki, in press), Fine and Gordon (1995) suggested that little has changed in the conduct of research despite feminist influences. The structures of research remain relatively unchanged even though feminists have argued for expanded research paradigms and strategies. Research through the 1990s has not decentered many of the white, male, heterosexual, affluent, non-disabled standards.

Some feminists were the first researchers to critique the standards based upon the dominant social system. Feminism provides one example of researching diverse populations. Fine and Gordon (1995) contend, however, that feminist research has had little impact on research except that more

women are published, included as subjects, and compared to males quantitatively. I have argued elsewhere (see Henderson, 1994) that research on gender diversity has been useful for exactly those reasons, although it has yet to revolutionize either our theory or practice. Those challenges remain. Identifying differences has been somewhat helpful in certain situations, but the time has come to move beyond some of those conclusions about differences (Henderson, 1994). The simple and essential notion of differences represents a safe intellectual and political compromise, but these findings do not move us to ask other questions about the meanings of differences. Future research about diverse populations must move us beyond simply describing differences into categories of understanding meanings.

Even with a growing awareness of leisure in a diverse society, some researchers' unconscious assumptions about diverse life conditions continue to be blind spots. If we want to understand the meanings of leisure in societies, then we must do our best to acknowledge that social, cultural, and historical differences do exist among people whom we research. Further, researchers must be willing to take on specific research aimed at groups previously ignored or assumed to be the same as people in the dominant social system.

The lack of research on some groups may be due to invisibility and oversight to some extent. Additionally, many researchers may be skeptical about what they might learn from researching diverse populations because of the challenge to current epistemology and existing theory. Many leisure researchers have asked "nice" questions and used existing methods uncritically. Many of us have failed to address the notions of *power* and how gender, race, class, and disability may have a cumulative effect on leisure behavior (e.g., Riddick & Stewart, 1994; Shinew, Floyd, McGuire, & Noe, 1995). Until we begin to tackle some of these difficult questions by including better explanations of diversity in our research, we will never understand the complex picture of leisure behavior.

The difficulty of including diversity in leisure research is not just a matter of awareness, or great strides in more inclusive research would be made by now. Most people in the 1990s acknowledge that diversity exists, but do not think it is important or know how to study diverse groups. The ethical and methodological problems also are daunting for some researchers (Jacobson et al., 1995). For example, according to Cox (1990), many white Americans generally do not consider race/ethnicity a topic of universal importance. Although they may agree that this research should be done, they see it as a "minority" issue and appropriate for scholars who are of the same ethnic minority, gender, or ability status. Further, Cox suggested that some scholars assume that the only people reading "minority" research are other minorities. In addition, people who are, for example, ethnic minorities, female, or disabled may be reluctant to do research about people like themselves for fear of being labeled or accused of bias. Finally, the appropriate research methods and the best way to include diverse populations in studies may be unclear.

Obviously, leisure researchers have a number of issues to consider regarding researching diverse populations. For this discussion, I will refer to a variety of groups considered diverse and hope that appropriate applications can be made from one group to another. For example, what we have learned in researching women and people with disabilities may have particular implications for researching other groups. In examining some of these issues, however, we may find the need to transform the way we address some research questions. Transformation may lead us into new political and ethical questions. For each research project undertaken, different issues may emerge.

Being a Member of the Researched Group

One of the frequently asked questions is whether one has to be a member of a group to research that group. We caution researchers that one might be biased if she or he is a group member. On the basis of beliefs such as those stated by Smears (1996), that thinking has changed greatly. Good arguments exist on both sides of the issue related to group membership. Concerns also surround whether the researcher is sampling from a population and wishes to assure that diversity is represented or whether a particular group is chosen to study because of being previously underresearched. Obviously, if you are sampling a population that is diverse, it is impossible for the researcher to be both male and female, black and white, middle-class and poor. If researchers had to represent the people they studied, we would have huge research teams instead of individuals doing the research. Collaboration strengthens many studies, but this collaboration is not always possible. The question is whether an individual researcher, particularly if she or he is doing interpretive research, can be a valid and reliable interpreter of the research.

Problems can exist in constructing and speaking for others. In the words of the African American feminist bell hooks (1990), "To know us better than we know ourselves" (p. 22) can be a problem in terms of "defining the other" and the difficulty presented by that situation. Most researchers have assumed that it is possible for an "outsider" to study "others" using value-free methodological procedures; that assumption, however, has been challenged by some feminist researchers (e.g., Stanley, 1990) as well as others focused on emancipatory research (e.g., Denzin, 1994; Reason & Rowan, 1981). On the other hand, Collins (1990) argued that a black feminist looking in on the white academy has provided useful perspectives not seen by the dominant social system.

A researcher in the dominant social system studying marginalized others might be perceived as colonialistic, manipulative, or exploitative. This concern is due to the possibility that an underresearched group might remain invisible or rendered as stereotypic or deviant from the "norm." Similarly, a concern exists about how the dominant social system researchers might impose "enlightened" cultural constructs on others from diverse groups. Race,

for example, is a means for placing both researcher and researched into a social structure and often a power structure. Race, therefore, may have bearings on the relationship established and potentially the results obtained.

Questions about relative similarity to the group studied are important. For example, as a female, I might be able to interview women who have disabilities, but is the research "better" if I also have a disability? If I'm a female with a mental disability, can I understand what being a female with a physical disability is like? Must I be a mother to study the ethic of care related to leisure and families? There is no denying that a researcher brings values and perspectives to any project, but should being a member of a different group than is being studied preclude a researcher from doing the analysis?

Perhaps research about diverse populations is too critically needed right now that we should worry about the characteristics of researchers. One of the reasons, however, that issues such as race have not been studied is because too few people are doing this research (Cox, 1990). If we further delimit who can do the research, even less of the work will get done until we have a larger pool of researchers. Educators in universities must focus on training people of color, people with disabilities, and other diversity group members to be researchers. In addition, individuals with a variety of social, cultural, and historical experiences are more likely to study a diverse range of topics and use a broader range of perspectives regarding these topics. Some groups such as low income people or high risk youth may never be able to do research in the typical way people with privilege have done research. We cannot count on researchers always emerging from the underserved or diverse group. If researchers use appropriate strategies, which I will discuss later in this paper, we can avoid some pitfalls.

Starting from one's own experience does not mean we have to identify directly with a group, but it may mean that we have to be able to describe how we relate to those individuals. For example, Reinharz (1992) noted that many white women studying blacks identify with an appreciation of the difficulties of living with sexism and racism in society. Further, in our article on women with disabilities (Henderson et al., 1995), addressing our experiences professionally and personally with disability might have provided a better context for our work. Describing the researcher's background may be helpful in some studies.

Obviously, the issues are complicated about whether a researcher is separated from or a part of the researched group. On a related aspect of this issue, we also have not debated the issue of whether "outsiders" can study the dominant social system. This assumption would suggest that women should never study men and Asian American researchers should never study European Americans. If researchers only studied a group that they knew, our research might be limited to a small number of case studies. If that is the case then we have predetermined the social science research agenda of individuals just on the basis of their physical or social characteristics. The problem with this conjecture can be taken a step further when people who study

certain groups (such as gay and lesbian people) are assumed to be of that group when they may not be. People with disabilities seem to be one group studied in leisure research that is counter to that assumption. Rarely, however, do we think about how researchers might be characterized if a dominant group is being studied.

Further, we might also consider in our society the credibility attached to who writes the research literature. Sometimes someone from a different standpoint has more credibility as when men write about the discrimination that women face (e.g., Witt, 1987). When men or any dominant group member discusses women or a "minority" group, sometimes they are taken more seriously because they do not appear to have a bias. Unfortunately when this respect happens, it appears to be due to perceptions that holders of power are to be revered. Therefore, heterosexual researchers in a heterosexual culture may get more respect than gay researchers who study a topic like gay and lesbian youth.

Regardless of the respect rendered, we need many people doing leisure research and presenting ideas that will acknowledge the lives of previously invisible, underresearched, and underserved populations. Ethically we cannot wait until we have the perfect researchers trained to do this work. We can mitigate some of these philosophical problems by examining appropriate strategies and methods.

Choosing Methods/Strategies to Research Diverse Populations

"Universal laws" of research often make race, gender, and social class pointless. These laws suggest that good research is good research regardless of the population studied. The same methods and strategies ought to work with all groups. Yet, as more studies evolve about previously underresearched and diverse groups, the needs for creative methods and clearly delineated strategies are apparent. These research needs also point toward opportunities for interdisciplinary work.

One of the major factors limiting research on diverse groups is methodological considerations (Cox, 1990). Some instruments used have not been appropriate for the information desired. This problem may become particularly evident when researching emotionally sensitive topics related to race (Cox, 1990) or sexual orientation (Jacobson et al., 1995). We must be careful in drawing conclusions about demographic differences and their meanings if we are not asking the right questions, or if we have not asked the right group of people. For example, we found that we failed to learn important aspects of some Native American women's physical activity when we failed to ask about such seasonal activities as sheep shearing or preparing for festivals.

The lack of diversity research may reflect social distrust rather than the researcher's failings (Reinharz, 1992). Some traditionally underserved individuals may be leery of why research is being conducted. Some people are reluctant to participate because they have never seen any benefits come from

studies or have never had research results shared with them. Some group members do not understand the purpose or need for the research. Cox (1990) suggested that participants are aware that research questions may be suspect. For example, different outcomes will occur if one is asking "how do young black males compare to young white males on variable X?" contrasted with the research question of "what are the characteristics of young black males regarding variable X?". The perceived agenda of these types of questions may be misunderstood. Therefore, some individuals need convincing of the value of the research and how the information will be used.

When we know little about the groups being studied, qualitative data often are helpful. The absence of well-established theoretical foundations requires more in-depth data collection to promote theory construction (Cox, 1990). Feminist researchers have provided models of creatively stretching the boundaries of what constitutes research methods (Reinharz, 1992). Some of these approaches come from the assumption that feminist research is designed FOR women not just ABOUT women.

Stanfield (1994) indicated, however, that few researchers have described how to develop indigenous "ethnic" models of qualitative research. This discussion is not the same as creating novel indigenous paradigms grounded distinctly in the experiences of people of color. Developing models, however, would provide an opening to the variety of approaches necessary to do research and would remove the dominant cognitive map criteria. As Stanfield suggested, the purpose of creating the new baby is not to bury the old one, but to create a family that more adequately reflects the plural character of the American society. Methods are important, but the strategies used to get information are essential.

Researchers may need to stray from research protocol to obtain data and create an environment of social support. For example, Cannon, Higginbotham, and Leung (1991) suggested that exploratory studies employing volunteer subjects are especially vulnerable to race and class bias. Studying only volunteers recognizes that volunteers are a self-selecting group adding to a white, middle-class bias especially since white women raised in middle-class families are most likely to volunteer. Some researchers wishing to study diverse groups have had trouble recruiting participants. Edwards (1990) suggested that researchers need to think carefully about how they make contact. Researchers should never assume that the institutional or socially ascribed status brought with them will get them into any situation. For example, some people of color may not want anything to do with white people. As a white University professor, Edwards said it helped that she admitted that she was in a different structural position than the black and working class women she was interviewing. She was up front and honest about her perceived institutional privilege.

To get a diverse sample may require more labor-intensive strategies involving personal contact. Cannon et al. (1991) suggested that skepticism about the purpose of the research, worries about protection of anonymity, and structural obstacles such as perceptions of less free time than white women were reasons that some women of color did not respond to their

research studies. They found the dominant group women were less likely to feel exploited in research. Further, white women were twice as likely to respond to media or letter solicitation while black women required personal contact to guarantee that they would not be exploited. Cannon et al. made it clear that the interviewers were black and white and the research team was biracial. Further, to listen to people is to empower them and if researchers want to hear them, they ought to go to the respondent's space or a safe space; researchers should examine the power dynamics of the place and the social actors (Reinharz, 1992).

In doing research on any diverse group, language and intent of the study must be clear for that group. Word choice and avoiding negative or misunderstood ideas should be considered (Mâsse et al., 1998). For example, when we met with the African American and Native American research advisory committees, both groups told us that the use of "free time" held negative connotations and we should not use that words in our questionnaires or interviews. Although they said "leisure" was a slightly better word, it also connoted something different from the information we sought about physical activity (Mâsse et al., 1998).

Researchers must also address the issue of social desirability. Most people want to "look good" in front of others and this perception may be particularly true for previously underresearched populations. Therefore, gatekeepers and participants must understand the value of honesty and be assured that the data will be analyzed to tell the story as accurately as possible. Issues of confidentiality are often critical so the researcher must be careful to explain how that confidentiality or anonymity will be handled. Even more important, researchers must do what they say and handle the research in the most confidential manner.

Involving Diverse Groups in Research Production

Regardless of the ethical rationales and the methodological techniques, involvement of the researched group as more than just "data sources" where possible is likely to produce the best results for some studies. We have to examine issues like power asymmetries (Fine & Gordon, 1995) and the effects they may have on the process and outcome of the research. Involving some research group members in the interpretation of data may be particularly useful when we address the meanings of the results and communicate the results to the participants. As Edwards (1990) cautioned in an article about whether white women should attempt to interview black women, white interviewers must be careful not to victimize or romanticize black women. The meanings of a social experience, as expressed by women (or any other group), must be unraveled if the experience is to be fully analyzed (Fine & Gordon, 1995). The challenge is how to get trustworthy meanings when we address diversity and leisure.

The first common sense approach is that researchers will need to determine ways to establish rapport with the people who are being studied. That admonition is easier said than done. Rapport should be "an outcome

and not a precondition" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 267). Relationships with participants in a study need to be based on relations of respect and shared information. Openness and clarity of communication are minimum goals. Researchers studying underserved and diverse populations cannot right all the wrongs of previous attempts at research. To treat interviewees in a non-exploitative manner, however, means to have respect for their time and sharing. Therefore, participants from any group need to know exactly why the research is being conducted and how it will be used. Further, they ought to be given a summary of the final report if they desire. These suggestions apply to any researched group whether dominant or underresearched.

Participatory research or establishing co-researchers or collaborators may also be a way to involve a group being studied. Smears (1996) suggested:

...engage disabled men and women in the research as collaborators. That will necessitate the development of a research agenda "owned" by disabled people themselves. Only then will it be possible to achieve the emancipatory research... (p. 81).

Meaningful roles might be given by asking individuals by asking them to be reviewers of the research proposal, recruiters of other individuals, or data interpreters. Appealing to ethnic solidarity or the solidarity of any group may help. If an individual knows that others are participating in a study, he or she may be more likely to cooperate. Also, if an individual sees and approves of the intended product of the research, she or he may be more willing to participate in future studies. In our research on women with disabilities, we found that a handful of individuals who got very interested in the project were helpful in providing opinions for months after the data collection was over (Bedini & Henderson, 1995/96).

Some researchers have been successful in using an advisory group from the population under study. This process extends the time needed to do research because time must be spent individually and with group members to explain the project, to solicit ideas, and to make the needed changes. If an advisory committee is used, the researcher must be willing to listen and provide enough information for committee members to make informed decisions. An advisory group that serves only as a rubber stamp cannot be as helpful as advisory groups involved in designing data collection tools, assisting in the possible recruitment of subjects, and helping to interpret the data.

One of the problems researchers encounter is the tendency to examine subjects or participants as simply one characteristic when all of us are more complex than simply being female or white or able-bodied. Contextualized research unearths how people reflect, reproduce, resist, and transform social contexts, hegemonic beliefs, and personal relationships. This research must examine not only issues like gender, but also race and class as they relate to the contexts of individuals' lives. When we try to explore the complexity of the human situation, we will come closer to understanding leisure behavior.

Diversity Research and Changes in the Researcher

Attempts to study underresearched groups should be followed with a label: "Warning: Researching diverse groups may change the researcher." As researchers from both the dominant and underresearched social systems begin to struggle with some of the questions outlined above, they often find their views of the world begin to change. I found this change to be the case when I began 15 years ago to search for the best way to study women and leisure. For the first time, I began to question the positivist, quantitative models that I had learned almost exclusively as a graduate student. In addition, I was forced to think about the "privileges" of researchers and how that privilege was embodied in my assumed status and credibility.

Doing diversity research as a member of an underresearched group and as an "outsider" has raised questions about the reflexive and self-reflective quality of our research and practice. Most individuals grow or change as a result of the process of research when we seek to address the ethical, methodological, and participatory aspects of conducting studies. Sending out a survey to people whom you will never meet is much different from working with advisory groups and individuals who may have experienced oppression in their lives like or unlike one's own experiences. In addition, dominant researchers have to be willing to hear what someone is saying, even when it violates our expectations or threatens our interests. In other words, if researchers want someone to tell it like it is, they have to hear it like it is (Reinharz, 1992).

Socially concerned people may experience some conflict in researching underserved populations and not taking an advocacy position. A difference is apparent between being "intellectually curious" and passionately angry (Reinharz, 1992). In today's world, one is no better than the other. We cannot always speak for others but we can speak out for others. Although research is supposed to be objective and unbiased, the values that researchers hold cannot help emerging when doing work to which we are committed. I have found, for example, that I cannot cower behind neutrality if I believe in feminist principles. All research is political. "Detached" researchers are representing the highest form of privilege. At the very least, detached researchers need to recognize their assumption of privilege, the potential inability to establish rapport, and the possibility of inaccurate interpretation. These concerns are essential in all research.

Researching diverse groups, whether we are or are not a member of that group, demands that we study who we are and who we are in relation to those we study. The "epistemology of insiderness" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 261) connotes that when we study others we can learn more about ourselves. In studying others' experiences we think we do not share, we sometimes find that we do share it in some way. Researchers will likely be forced into being clear about where they stand politically and theoretically even when stances are multiple, shifting, and mobile. Any standpoint approach requires a high degree of reflexivity by the researcher.

Writing "about" a group is different from writing as a member of that group. The difference between knowing and knowing about must be made clear and the researcher must think about this difference. Researchers must also consider how they will appeal to the reader and establish their credibility in being able to do this research. As indicated earlier in this paper, one may not have to be a group member but she or he must describe how the research was conducted to assure that the research was valid.

Moving Beyond the Issues

No simple cookbook answers exist in researching non-dominant, underserved, and diverse groups and our role as leisure researchers. In addition, researchers doing work about diverse groups must also be willing to address problems related to publishing. Although we would hope that these problems do not exist in the field of leisure research, we must acknowledge the possibilities of reviewers not being familiar with the literature, editors and reviewers insisting on comparative research designs rather than descriptive or interpretive designs, and people having particularistic reactions to the topic and results (Cox, 1990).

Regardless of any of the potential problems described above, researchers in the field of leisure studies cannot abdicate their responsibility to make sure our research is inclusive just as we are moving to try to make recreation programs inclusive. Ideally, all research teams would benefit from being pluralistically represented related to characteristics such as gender, race, and disability but this configuration is seldom possible. What is clear is more researchers from dominant groups are needed to study diversity issues (Cox, 1990). I am not suggesting that we all ought to be experts in doing research on diverse groups, but I am suggesting that we should not say that researching race or sexual orientation or gender is only the responsibility of the researchers who possess those characteristics. Further, we have many research designs, methods, tools, and strategies available and researchers must continue to ascertain which ones are best for given situations.

Concerning the question of whether white women should interview black women, Edwards (1990) concluded that to ignore black women was worse than to include them even if the researcher was not as able to establish rapport and trust because she was white. I am also coming to that conclusion. To ignore diversity, in a field such as ours, would be the greatest travesty for us as leisure researchers. We need research on a variety of populations and, although we are attempting to train researchers in our field who represent diverse populations, we cannot wait for these "others" to do this work. Further, I do not believe we can wait until all the techniques and strategies are clearly defined. Researching diverse groups will not always be easy, but it is possible for both "insiders" and "outsiders" to do this work if we are sensitive to our subjects and to the methods and strategies available. That mandate exists in all ongoing research.

Regardless of our physical or social characteristics, every leisure researcher studying any aspect of human leisure behavior needs to be aware of how to promote research that includes all people. Some of us may do the research, some of us may review it for possible publication, and many of us, I hope, will read this literature. In diversity training, strategies relate to "being an effective ally" (e.g., Sherover-Marcuse, n.d.). Being an ally is the least that any of us can do, regardless of our social situation or our research interests.

Some of the points that Sherover-Marcuse (n.d.) made for addressing issues in the workplace may be useful guidelines for researchers who study and read articles about leisure and diversity. For example, all of us need to assume that we are worthy of being allies. Each of us has the right and obligation to be concerned about other people's oppression and invisibility. People who have been underresearched generally want their story told in a way that avoids stereotypes and gives them dignity. We must assume that people in underresearched groups are experts on their experiences and that we have much to learn from them. If we learn about the history and culture of the diverse group, we will be able to understand much more about the present situation. As researchers we must recognize that we may make mistakes in these endeavors. Therefore, we ought to acknowledge them, but most of all learn from our errors. For example, by not talking about our relationship with the researched in our article on women with disabilities, I learned that I need to do a better job of situating myself in future writing. Above all, we must not retreat from advocating for or doing research that includes diverse groups, regardless of the potential for criticism and the many unanswered questions.

References

- Allison, M. T. (1988). Breaking boundaries: Future directions in cross-cultural research. *Leisure Sciences, 10*, 247-259.
- Bedini, L. A., & Henderson, K. A. (1995/96). The therapeutic value of the interviewing process in research. *Annual in Therapeutic Recreation, 6*, 55-63.
- Cannon, L. W., Higginbotham, E., & Leung, M. L. A. (1991). Race and class bias in qualitative research on women. In M. M. Fonow & J. A. Cook (Eds.), *Beyond methodology: Feminist scholarship as lived research* (pp. 107-118). Bloomington, IN: Indiana Press.
- Carr, D. S., & Williams, D. R. (1993). Understanding the role of ethnicity in outdoor recreation experiences. *Journal of Leisure Research, 25*, 22-38.
- Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought*. New York: Routledge.
- Cox, Jr., R. (1990). Problems with research by organizational scholars on issues of race and ethnicity. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 26*(1), 5-23.
- Denzin, N. K. (1994). The art and politics of interpretation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Guba (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 500-515). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Edwards, R. (1990). Connecting method and epistemology: A white woman interviewing black women. *Women's Studies International Forum, 13*, 477-490.
- Fine, M., & Gordon, S. (1995). Feminist transformations of/despite psychology. In Fine, M. (Ed.), *Disruptive voices: The possibilities of feminist research* (p. 1-16). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

- Floyd, M. F., Shinew, K. J., McGuire, F. A., & Noe, F. P. (1994). Race, class, and leisure activity preferences: Marginality and ethnicity revisited. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26(2), 158-173.
- Henderson, K. A. (1994). Perspectives on analyzing gender, women, and leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 25, 119-137.
- Henderson, K., Bedini, L., Hecht, L., & Schuler, R. (1995). Women with physical disabilities and the negotiation of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences*, 14, 17-31.
- Henderson, K. A. & Bialeschki, M. D. (in press). Feminisms and leisure research. In T. Burton & E. Jackson (Eds.), *Understanding leisure and recreation*. State College, PA: Venture.
- Henderson, K. A., Winn, S., & Roberts, N. (1996, January). *Kind of in the middle: The meanings of the outdoors for women students*. Paper presented at the Coalition for Education in the Outdoors Research Symposium, Martinsville, Indiana.
- hooks, b. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston: South End Press.
- Hutchinson, R. (1988). A critique of race, ethnicity, and social class in recent leisure-recreation research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 20, 10-30.
- Jacobson S., Yaffe, R., & Sheldon, K. (1995, May). *Researching sensitive issues about women and leisure*. Paper presented at the Toward a New Understanding about Women and Leisure Conference, Athens, GA.
- MacKay, K. J. (1996). A first nation interpretation of a national park's image. In D. Dawson (Ed.), *Program of the 8th Canadian Congress on Leisure Research* (pp. 171-174). Ottawa: University of Ottawa.
- Mascia-Lees, F. E., Sharpe, P., & Cohen, C. B. (1989). The postmodernist turn in anthropology: Cautions from a feminist perspective. *Signs*, 15(1), 7-33.
- Mâsse, L. C., Ainsworth, B. E., Tortolero, S., Henderson, K. A., Fulton, J., & Mayo, K. (1998). Measuring physical activity in mid-life, older, and minority women: Issues and recommendations from an experts' panel meeting. *Journal of Women's Health*, 7, 1-10.
- Reason, P., & Rowan, J. (Eds.). (1981). *A sourcebook of new paradigm research*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Riddick, C. C., & Stewart, D. G. (1994). An examination of the life satisfaction and importance of leisure in the lives of older female retirees: A comparison of Blacks and Whites. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26, 75-87.
- Roberts, N. S., & Drogin, E. B. (1993). The outdoor recreation experience: Factors affecting participation of African American women. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 16(1), 14-18.
- Sherover-Marcuse, R. (n.d.). *Unlearning racism workshops*. Oakland, CA: The Ricky Sherover-Marcuse Liberation Fund.
- Shinew, K., Floyd, M., McGuire, F., & Noe, F. (1995). Gender, race, and subjective social class and their association with leisure preferences. *Leisure Sciences*, 17, 75-89.
- Silverberg, K. E., Backman, K. F., & Backman, S. J. (1996). Environmental attitudes and nature-based travel behavior: A survey of African-Americans. In D. Dawson (Ed.), *Program of the 8th Canadian Congress on Leisure Research* (pp. 258-263). Ottawa: University of Ottawa.
- Smears, L. (1996). Comment: Researching disability: A response to Karla Henderson, Leandra Bedini, Lynn Hecht, and Rosemary Schuler. *Leisure Studies*, 15, 79-81.
- Stanfield II, J. H. (1994). Ethnic modeling in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 175-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stanley, L. (Ed.). (1990). *Feminist praxis*. London: Routledge.
- Witt, P. (1987). Women in recreation management: A man's perspective on understanding and change. *Parks & Recreation*, 22(3), 42-45.