False Dichotomies, Intellectual Diversity, and the "Either/Or" World:
Leisure Research in Transition

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In 1982, Naisbitt described "megatrends" in society. The trends and the examples that struck me the most related to the movement from "either/or to multiple option" (p. 231). He noted that through much of the century, we had two or maybe three choices. We could have chocolate or vanilla ice cream with maybe strawberry thrown in occasionally. We had our choice of a Chevy or a Ford. In the 1970s, things began to change. We now had Baskin Robbins 31 flavors of ice cream. We had cars available manufactured all over the world. Our lives were transformed with the evolution to a multiple option society. How positive it is to have choices. Yet, how overwhelming it can be to sort through the choices and make decisions.

The area of leisure research, as well as the broader field of the social sciences, has evolved to a multiple option world. In a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* Feagin (1999) described the possible crisis facing sociology related to encouraging "greater intellectual diversity" (p. B4). The best way to describe our new world of research is no longer "either/or" but rather "both/and." These shifts parallel postmodernism to some extent, and they suggest no totally right or wrong approaches. For leisure researchers, the expansion beyond binary thinking to more intellectual diversity provides a strong anchor. All of us in this field recognize the changes, and yet I am not sure that we appreciate the value and the challenges that these multiple options hold. Some of this discussion may sound familiar. I believe, however, it is useful to place some of the false dichotomies on the table so we can articulate the changes that are occurring in leisure research. I will discuss six false dichotomies (i.e., either/or premises) that leisure researchers are addressing as we move to the next millennium.

Either/Or Premises

Qualitative/Quantitative. The debate over what data are best is fortunately over in our field. For the most part, the evolution to qualitative research as a viable approach to leisure research was steady and quiet. The goal of research ought to be to study phenomena as thoroughly, broadly, and deeply as time, energy, and resources allow. The value of quantitative

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data is that they can produce factual, reliable, outcome information that may be generalized. Qualitative data generate rich, valid, detailed, process information that leaves the study participants' perspectives intact and provides an insider's view to better understand a phenomenon under study. We know that some approaches work better for particular research problems than others.

Despite the objections of a few purists, we see examples of how qualitative and quantitative data can be linked. Linking data allows researchers to accept the assumptions, and limitations, of using both qualitative and quantitative data to create broader perspectives (Henderson, Ainsworth, Stolarzyck, Hootman, & Levin, 1999). The days of either/or methods have been replaced with numerous choices of methods. The challenge lies in researchers carefully rationalizing the choices they make, and readers and reviewers being able to critically evaluate the rigor and the theoretical value of the options chosen.

Researchers/Practitioners. The notion of a researcher and practitioner gap is a false dichotomy that needs examination in the future. None of us are solely one or the other. Further, in this complex world, we need collaboration between and within both positions. This discussion might lead us to also examine the duality of evaluation and research or the difference between the questions asked of "does it work?" and "how does it contribute to the body of knowledge?" These questions are not mutually exclusive.

The opportunities for data collection and problem solving are the same whether one is a researcher or a practitioner or whether an individual is doing evaluation or doing research. The issues and social ills that both leisure researchers and practitioners want to address in contributing to the quality of life for all individuals are not dissimilar. The gap, however, is sometimes perceived as wide. With the technology and the commitment of today's professionals, the potential to narrow the gap has never been better. The challenge is to take research and determine its relevancy to the daily lives of individuals and to the field of practice. This responsibility lies with both researchers and practitioners.

Specialties/Generalizations. In the 1980s we could choose between *Journal of Leisure Research* and *Leisure Sciences* for major leisure research publishing outlets. Leisure research was presented mainly at the National Park and Recreation Association Congress and maybe the AAHPERD Conventions. Today we have numerous options for publishing our research (e.g., *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, Therapeutic Recreation Journal, Journal of Applied Recreation Research, Annuals of Tourism, Society and Natural Resources* to name only a few) and even more opportunities for making presentations at the multitude of conferences held each year. The proliferation of outlets for research gives more opportunities, but it also tends to segment the research done. We assume these opportunities allow us to know more about more topics, and they do. Knowing more and more will mean less and less, however, until we have a broader context for how our work fits in society.

On the other hand, the specialties can result in losing sight of the holistic nature of the field of leisure research. I recognize that all leisure re-

searchers do not see themselves within the "recreation field," yet I believe
those ties are important for those of us who are in "departments of recrea-
tion." We need both the specialties and general approaches in conducting
and interpreting leisure research. We need specialty journals and confer-
ences, but we also need broad based journals and associations like NRPA.
All of us have to make choices about how to share and disseminate our
research, but I hope we would be both generalists and specialists. Specialties
contribute to general goals and general approaches give us the foundation
for specialties.

   Teachers/Researchers.   A myth exists that good researchers cannot be
good teachers and vice versa. Similarly, sometimes young doctoral graduates
believe they must make a choice between these dualities. Many individuals
have found that both are important. Good teachers use research (their own
as well as others) in the classroom. Good researchers learn from students
and teach students to appreciate research and make the ties between re-
search and practice.

   The duality of publish or perish continues to be an interesting dilemma
for some individuals in higher education, although the consequences of this
dichotomy are highly variable. The definition of scholarship in many uni-
versities casts a wide net. In other universities, including my own, the defi-
nition is narrow. New assistant professors need information about the ex-
pectations for publishing within their setting. New faculty members may want
to choose their place of employment based on what is compatible for them.
Regardless of whether a faculty member identifies more as a researcher or
a teacher, those of us in higher education who pursue "the life of the mind"
need to be concerned about scholarship. Teaching and research must occur
in tandem if our field is to grow in intellectual diversity, from the standpoint
of students as well as professionals, in the future.

   Objective/Subjective.   Waning are the days when everyone believed that
research was completely objective. Feminists (e.g., Henderson, Bialeschki,
Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996; Reinharz, 1992) were helpful in showing this fal-
lacy. Although researchers want to remove as much bias as possible, we rec-
ognize the value and impact of the subjective self. Self-reflection is necessary
if our research is to enable us to grow and change. If we are not affected in
some way by the research that we undertake, we likely will not continue to
be impassioned to do this work. We need a combination of objective and
subjective influences, and similar to the serenity prayer, "the ability to know
the difference."

   The intellectual diversity of leisure research requires that we consider
both the objective and subjective. It also requires that we process the binary
definitions of success and failure. We assume that the leisure literature we
read is the result of success. Yet, some of the failures researchers have in
undertaking research may give as much information as the successes. I have
joked about wishing we could have a session at the Leisure Research Sym-
posium or a special issue of a journal to talk about "research that didn't
work" or "dumb things I did that I hope everyone else in the world avoids."
Using both objective and subjective approaches, as well as acknowledging

the line between success and failure, can move our research to greater rigor and more theoretically interesting approaches in the future.

Similarities/Differences. Leisure researchers (e.g., Henderson et al., 1996) as well as researchers in other fields (e.g., Stansfield & Dennis, 1993) provide a critique of how differences have been constructed and studied. Although this topic is much too complex to describe in detail in this short paper, it is a paradox that requires critical thought and discussion among leisure researchers. Problems exist when we arbitrarily construct groups defined as different. Differences, without interpreting what those differences mean, may provide descriptive information but add little to broader understanding. Essentializing characteristics of people as well as accounting for multiple identities create ambiguity. We are only beginning to develop useful ways to analyze behavior and identity. Both similarities and differences need to be studied in broader contexts with an expanded view of us/them related to leisure research.

So What? Now What?

These examples of false dichotomies offer challenges to the intellectual diversity of leisure research. I have grown increasingly impatient in recent years with the deconstruction of ideas without a concomitant reconstruction. The answers in many cases lie somewhere within the binaries. I would be remiss if I did not try to offer some ideas about where we need to go as we nurture intellectual diversity in our field in the future. I offer four "old" ideas as stepping off points:

1. Recognize that we now live in a multiple option "both/and" world. Our dogmatism and essentializing of the past and our Cartesian anxiety may be a barrier for us. By acknowledging the both/and world, however, I am not suggesting that "anything goes." Now more than ever we need the expertise to critique and modify our research. We must not, however, be too quick to throw the proverbial "baby out with the bath water." All that was done in the past enables us to evolve into broader understandings of the amorphous idea of leisure behavior.

2. At the risk of promoting crass commercialism, I believe Nike got it right in saying "Just do it." Because of the multitude of options, researchers sometimes feel paralyzed; we fear making mistakes. I contend that we have to choose a path and go down it. The more paths we choose and the more roads we take, the more we will learn about leisure research. No perfect path exists so we must do the best we can and recognize the next project will offer new paths to tread.

3. Many attempts have and will be made to fuse the gap between researchers and practitioners. Practitioners and students as future practitioners need training so that they can be critical consumers of research. Researchers need to keep the issues of practice in mind as they design research projects. Researchers might consider any study

undertaken as holding the potential for two publications: one a technical theoretical piece that contributes to the body of knowledge and informs other researchers about method and theory, and the second article as the applied interpretation of "so what, now what?'

4. Collaborations are essential. I love my colleagues in this field because people are willing to share with one another. In some sciences, lab groups are highly secretive fearing that someone may discover something before they do. An understanding of leisure behavior and the best ways to deliver the myriad of leisure services has more than enough challenges for each of us in our lifetimes. Collaborations with each other, across disciplines, and with practitioners and participants are ways to work together. This approach can enhance the quality of our work lives as well as our own leisure lives.

Multiple options lie before us. Greater intellectual diversity in leisure research can be ours if we embrace these options, apply thoughtful and rigorous approaches, and consider all the possibilities for understanding the emerging dimensions of leisure behavior.

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