

Conceptualizing Resistance: Women's Leisure as Political Practice

Susan M. Shaw

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo

The idea of leisure as resistance focuses attention on the political nature of leisure, and specifically on the potential for leisure to enhance individual empowerment and to bring about positive social change. In this paper, the different theoretical perspectives that have led researchers to the idea of leisure as resistance, including structuralism, post-structuralism, and interactionism, are discussed. Using insights from these perspectives, three issues related to the conceptualization of resistance are examined: the collective versus individual nature of resistance; the question of outcomes of resistance; and the issue of intentionality. It is argued that resistance is, by definition, both individual and collective, and that research on resistance needs to focus on the specific types of oppression and constraint being resisted through leisure. However, while intentionality and outcome are also important aspects of resistance, they should not be seen as defining characteristics. Intentional acts to resist may be more or less successful, and successful resistance may occur without prior intent. Although the focus of this analysis is on women's leisure, the framework developed here can be applied to all forms of resistance, and hopefully can be used to enhance our understanding of leisure as political practice.

KEYWORDS: *Individual resistance, collective resistance, outcomes, intentionality, women's leisure*

Introduction

The idea of leisure as a form of resistance is based on the assumption that leisure practices are linked to power and power relations in society. That is, leisure is recognized as one area of social life, among others, in which individual or group power is not only acquired, maintained and reinforced, but also potentially reduced or lost. Leisure as resistance implies that leisure behaviors, settings and interactions can challenge the way in which power is exercised, making leisure a form of political practice.

This conceptualization of leisure as political practice is clearly controversial. It suggests that traditional definitions of leisure as a place of freedom, autonomy, individual choice, self expression and satisfaction, are inadequate. Such definitions, which are particularly dominant in North American leisure research (Coalter, 1999; Mannell & Kleiber, 1997), tend to focus on the

Address correspondence to: Susan M. Shaw, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1. (E-mail address: sshaw@healthy.uwaterloo.ca)

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benefits of leisure to individuals, and to ignore political processes and repercussions. The idea of leisure as resistance, then, necessitates a different approach to understanding leisure. It means critically evaluating the notion of leisure as "innocent" (Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1990). This approach does not deny that leisure has greater degrees of personal freedom and self expression than other forms of activity, but that it has other characteristics as well. In fact, the relative freedom of leisure settings may make them prime locations for resistance activities as a result of increased opportunities to exercise personal power (Green, 1998; Shaw, 1999a).

Leisure as resistance is also controversial among critical leisure theorists, for whom the political nature of leisure practice is deemed to be self evident. Some critical theorists, for example, see resistance through leisure as a form of challenge to social class structures and inequities (Clarke & Critchener, 1985), while others place emphasis on patriarchy and resistance to structured gender relations (Deem, 1999), and yet others focus on the intersection of class, race and gender (hooks, 1989), and the need for resistance to power structures in all areas of social life. Moreover, taking a different perspective again, postmodernist and post-structuralist interpretations of resistance focus on the idea of personal power, rather than resistance to structured power relations (Wearing, 1998). This is because postmodern society is seen to be characterized by diversity and fragmentation, as well as by the disintegration of traditional power structures (Rojek, 1997).

The controversial aspects of leisure as resistance may be one reason why the conceptualization of this idea has not been fully developed in the literature to date. First, energy has been directed towards arguing that resistance is a relevant concept (Shaw, 1994), rather than defining its meaning or meanings. Second, theoretical debate, particularly between structuralists and post-modernists (Scruton, 1994), has also deflected attention away from conceptual clarification. This means that a number of conceptual or definitional issues remain "unsolved" and unclarified. For example, it is not clear whether particular outcomes, such as political change or enhanced personal power, are a necessary component of resistance, nor whether resistance depends, in the first place, on the occurrence or nature of prior oppression. In addition, there is little discussion of whether resistance is collective as well as personal. Further, given the emphasis on individual acts of resistance, there is surprisingly little attention to the question of whether resistance is, by definition, a deliberate or conscious attempt to challenge power or enhance personal power, or whether it can be an unintended consequence of certain types of behavior.

The purpose of this paper is to address these issues, in the hope of moving towards a clearer conceptualization of the notion of resistance. The focus of this analysis is on women's leisure as resistance. This is because most of the empirical research on leisure as resistance has examined the ways in which women have used leisure to challenge their own lack of power or their dissatisfaction with societal views about women's expected roles and behaviors. However, much of the analysis presented here about leisure, resistance,

and gender may also apply to other forms of resistance as well, that is, to resistance that challenges other forms of inequity or powerlessness.

To present a framework for analysis, the paper first examines the different theoretical roots that have led researchers to the idea of leisure as resistance. This provides a backdrop for the later discussion of conceptual issues, which include: the collective and/or individual nature of resistance; the importance of considering outcomes or impacts arising out of acts of resistance; and whether or not conscious intent is an inherent characteristic of resistance. The concluding section of the paper presents some suggestions about conceptualizing and defining forms of resistance. It is hoped that this will encourage and facilitate future empirical research endeavors, as well as advance theoretical understanding.

Theoretical Origins of Resistance

Structuralist Perspectives

Much of the research on leisure as resistance is based on a structural perspective of society. Resistance is conceptualized as acts that challenge the structured power relations of class, race, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other forms of societal stratifications. It is oppressed or disadvantaged groups or individuals, who are acting to change power relations and gain personal or collective empowerment, who are seen to exemplify resistance.

For many theorists working within the structuralist tradition, leisure is seen as a fertile ground for the "cultural contestation between dominant and subordinate groups" (Clarke & Critchener, 1985, p. 227). Following Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, emphasis tends to be placed on the myriad of ways in which leisure practice reinforces inequities and dominant relations of power (Clarke & Critchener, 1985; Deem, 1988; Green et al., 1990). That is, leisure is seen to be an important site for the reproduction or legitimization of unequal access to power and resources in society. However, since hegemony is never fully complete, but involves a continual struggle, or negotiation and renegotiation (Gramsci, 1971), resistance is also possible. Thus, resistance is the "flip side" of reproduction, and these two processes are seen to work continuously and contiguously, in opposite directions, often with one or the other process being dominant at any one time.

A structuralist perspective also places emphasis on the role of ideology. Ideologies, representing systems of beliefs, perceptions, and representations that people use to make sense of the world around them (Green et al., 1990), are seen as part of the superstructure, rather than the material base of any society. As such, they play a powerful role in the struggle for hegemony in that they conceal contradictions and antagonisms, and function to make power inequities seem "natural" or "normal". An important aspect of resistance, therefore, is resistance to dominant ideologies, associated with such factors as gender, race, the family, or sexuality. Challenging ideologies are thus a challenge to underlying power relations. Since ideologies are perpet-

uated through cultural activities, and especially through representational activities such as the media (Hall, 1977), the importance of leisure is evident. Because of its representational nature, through such activities as sports, social activities and celebrations, as well as media activities, such as television, movies, videos, and magazines, leisure practice is seen to reproduce, but also sometimes to resist, dominant ideologies (Shaw, 1996).

Research on leisure as resistance to structured gender relations has focused on the various ways in which leisure activities and contexts challenge women's and girls' lack of power, or their confinement to restrictive role expectations. For example, Bryson's (1987) discussion of sport places emphasis on the ways in which this form of leisure reinforces masculine hegemony. However, she also points to ways in which women can challenge and resist this process through their own participation as athletes and administrators, and through the promotion of counter-hegemonic sports. In addition, McRobbie's (1991) research with adolescent girls shows how they use the safety of their own bedrooms to resist dominant views of how girls "should" behave, to develop alternate identities, and to gain personal control, at least over some aspects of their lives. More recently, Green's (1998) research on women's friendships explores the ways in which women's talk and women's leisure can reflect traditional ideologies of femininity, while at the same time facilitating acts of resistance to these ideologies. For example, women often use humor to subvert sexist imagery, and this can lead to empowerment and to resistance to gendered stereotypes (Green, 1998).

Structuralist accounts of power and ideology, and particularly feminist writings on the gendered nature of power relations, have been criticized for being deterministic and essentialist, and for emphasizing structure over agency (e.g., Rojek, 1995; Rojek, 1997). However, this criticism does not seem to be justified, at least with regard to the research on resistance. While feminists who adopt a structuralist position draw attention to the ways in which dominant power relations and ideologies restrict and constrain women's lives (Deem, 1988; Scraton, 1994), the possibility of resistance places importance on agency, empowerment and opportunities of social change as well (Green, 1998; Scraton, 1994). This recognition of both structure and agency is reflected in the way resistance is conceptualized and used from this perspective. Specifically, resistance is not seen only in individual terms. Rather, since resistance is seen as a challenge to power relations and ideologies, it is conceptualized as collective as well as individual. In other words, individual empowerment, arising out of resistance to constraining material and ideological conditions, has the potential to empower others in similar situations, and to reduce systemic inequities. Thus individual acts have collective implications, and potential impacts beyond the individual.

Postmodernist and Post-Structuralist Perspectives

A somewhat different approach to resistance has emerged from feminist researchers who have adopted a post-structuralist or postmodernist ap-

proach. These researchers typically base their ideas on Foucault's extensive writing on power and resistance. Structural analysis is rejected, and, instead, power is seen to have multiple sources, and to be available to all individuals in their everyday lives. This means that there are multiple possibilities for resistance as well (Wearing, 1998). Linked to this theoretical position is an emphasis on diversity. In other words, a unitary view of women sharing a "common world", or shared condition of oppression (Scruton, 1994), is rejected in favour of recognition of the different situations, subjectivities and experiences of individual women (Wearing, 1998).

For Foucault, personal power was seen to be produced in unstable ways, through "capillary action" (Foucault, 1984), and not seen as the static preserve of particular privileged groups or individuals. Rather than looking at the ways in which hegemony is maintained through ideologies linked to dominant power relations, one of Foucault's major contributions was his concept of "discourse". As ways of talking about knowledge and truth, discourses reflect sets of rules, determining what it is possible to talk about and how that talk can proceed at any one time (Ramazanoglu, 1993). Foucault's insistence that power is constituted and transmitted through such discourses (Foucault, 1984; Gordon, 1980), means that resistance to the power of others is always possible, because "counter-discourses" can be developed that produce new knowledge and that lead to new sources of power (Ramazanoglu, 1993).

Foucault did not address issues of gender or gendered power relations (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 1993) because of his rejection of the idea that power was something that one group or category "held" over another (Foucault, 1984). Nevertheless, some feminist researchers (e.g., Wearing, 1998), have made use of Foucault's ideas to explore ways in which women's leisure can be conceptualized as resistance. For Wearing, post-structuralist theorizing suggests that resistance for women is linked to the personal deployment of power, and the freedom to develop new identities and new freedoms that are not subject to somebody else's control. For example, her research with adolescents shows that certain leisure activities can lead to the construction of new and resistant feminine identities (Wearing, 1992), and her research with new mothers looks at the ways in which some women claim a right to personal leisure and resist some of the repressive aspects of motherhood (Wearing, 1990). This perspective, then, focuses much more on individual rather than collective resistance, the end product being individual empowerment rather than broader social change.

The advantage of this post-structuralist view of resistance is its recognition of diversity among women (as well as among men). It is evident that women's experiences differ substantially due to such factors as class, race, sexual orientation, and age. In addition, post-structuralism and postmodernism also focuses on the diversity of personal subjectivities and on idiosyncratic factors which may affect access to power and to resistance strategies. According to Wearing (1998), another advantage of post-structuralism is its inherent "optimism," through its emphasis on agency and on the "celebration of difference" (p. 144).

However, the post-structuralist position also creates difficulties for the conceptualization of resistance. A number of feminist writers (e.g., Ransom, 1993) have criticized the pluralism that underpins Foucault's analysis of power. Foucault's emphasis on difference and on individual rather than institutionalized power is seen to undermine feminist politics and any concerted movement towards social change (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 1993). A similar argument can be made about the post-structuralist view of resistance. While the possibility that resistance is available to all might seem to make social transformation an achievable goal, the diffusion of power and the rejection of structural relations of power, makes the object of such resistance difficult to pinpoint. It becomes difficult to determine the nature and form of power that women might be seeking to resist through their leisure. Specifically, is resistance to be equated with all forms of personal power, such that any person exercising power can be seen as an individual act of resistance? Or, is resistance a concept to be applied only in particular situations of oppression or powerlessness? The post-structuralism perspective on resistance, therefore, is one that clearly focuses on individual acts and behavioral strategies, but begs the question of whether the forms of power being resisted are in any way structured, common, or shared beyond the individual experience.

Interactionist Perspectives

A third route to the analysis of gender and resistance within the leisure field has been via a social psychological perspective, particularly social interactionism. Researchers who bring this perspective to the study of women's leisure tend to focus on the subjective experiences of leisure in different social and interactional contexts. Linkages are then drawn between leisure experiences and women's experiences of oppression or constraint arising out of their relationship to societal power relations and ideological factors. This approach can be seen as an attempt to meld insights at the micro-level on individual experiences and subjectivities with a macro-level analysis of structured relations of power. Resistance is seen to occur when women adopt behaviors or express themselves through activities which provide personal empowerment and which, at the same time, reflect a challenge to dominant, restrictive or constraining views of femininity, sexuality, or motherhood.

Freysinger and Flannery's (1992) research with women in their 30s and 40s showed that self-determined leisure, rather than affiliative leisure, was valued as a source of self expression, identity and self esteem. The authors suggest that this form of leisure was not only a source of empowerment for the women in the study, but also a form of resistance, in that through such activities the women were resisting being limited to the narrow roles of wife, partner and mother.

Other social psychological research related to the issue of resistance includes Henderson and Bialeschki's (1991) work on women's sense of entitlement. While not using the term "resistance", these researchers discuss the role of women's belief in a right to personal leisure for themselves, and

the impact of this belief on their empowerment and ability to overcome constraints. Similarly, Harrington, Dawson and Bolla (1992), in their research on constraints to women's leisure, suggest that resisting societal pressure to conform to an ethic of care is a necessary component of women's empowerment, and thus to their increased opportunities for leisure.

Resistance has also been linked to the experience of participation in particular types of leisure activities that do not conform to traditional gender roles (Shaw, 1999a). For example, while aerobics participation (a "conforming" activity) is seen primarily as a form of gender reproduction because of the reinforcement of women's concerns about body image and appearance (Frederick & Shaw, 1995), participation in "non-conforming" activities, which challenge traditional images of femininity, might constitute resistance (Wiley, Shaw, & Havitz, 2000). In addition, while women's experiences with pornography may often be disempowering (Shaw, 1999b), images in the media which challenge traditional views of women's sexuality may be affirming and empowering.

In many ways this perspective on resistance through leisure is based on a structural view of power because of its focus on traditional versus non-traditional ideologies of femininity. However, it also focuses on individual subjectivity, experience, autonomy, and self expression. Thus, it has at least some conceptual links both with the structuralism approach and with the post-structuralism approach. It supports the idea that leisure is a collective act, at least in its implications and potential for social change. At the same time, it focuses on individual agency. Moreover, because of its social psychological roots, this perspective raises the issue of the meaning of resistance to individuals. Since empowerment and resistance are seen to be associated with self expression and self-determination, this would seem to imply that resistance is a deliberate or conscious choice made by the participant or actor. This idea, though, has not been fully explored, nor the question of whether some acts of resistance may be unintentional.

The three approaches discussed here lead to somewhat different, though not necessarily contradictory, conceptualizations of resistance. They also provide insight into the issues that need to be addressed in order to enhance clarification. These issues are discussed in the following section.

Conceptual Issues

Is Resistance Individual or Collective?

The question of whether resistance should be conceptualized as an individual or collective act clearly relates to whether oppression or constraint is seen to be systematic and structured, or individual and idiosyncratic. For structuralists, individual experiences of oppression, whether related to gender, race, class, or other dimensions, reflect broader power relations, as exemplified by the expression "the personal is political." While most feminist researchers today recognize the importance of agency and subjectivity, they also reject the relativism inherent in individualizing all experiences (Scruton,

1994). Differences and diversity of experiences among women (and among men) are increasingly recognized. Nevertheless, the structuralism position is that this diversity is due to a complex system of power relations, such that a woman of color, from a working class background, faces a different, and more oppressive set of constraints compared to a white middle class woman. At the same time, structuralism also assumes that women share some commonalities of experiences simply because of their gender.

Applying this assumption to the issue of resistance leads to the conclusion that resistance is both individual and collective. The individual may engage in acts of resistance, and these affect her or his life on an individual level, but at the same time such acts will also affect others in similar situations. Of course, resistance can also be collective in the sense that groups or collectivities may choose to resist. For example, employees of a company may refuse to accept sexist or harassing behaviors at work, or members of a women's sports team may challenge what they see as degrading, uncomfortable, or sexualized dress codes. But even in such situations, the individual, as well as the group, can be seen to be engaging in a resistant act.

From the postmodernist perspective, the idea of resistance as collective is more problematic. If structures of power do not exist, or are seen to be ambiguous or to be distortions of reality (Rojek, 1997), the assumption is that the individual is resisting her unique situation of constraint or powerlessness, and that her individual act would not be expected to have implications for others. Collective acts of resistance would not be expected, either, because of the lack of necessity to challenge structured relations of power. In addition, the notion of individual resistance makes it difficult to distinguish acts of resistance from other instances of agenic action.

In fact, post-structuralism feminists, such as Wearing (1998), do not completely reject the idea of commonalities among women, or the shared experience of inequity or inferiorization due to gender. Rather, they seem to retain the notion of women's lack of power in society, while at the same time placing emphasis on the diversity of situations, and on the existence of multiple subjectivities and experiences. In Wearing's (1990) work with new mothers, for example, the use of a Foucaultian perspective on power and resistance, and emphasis on the individual relationships between women and their husbands, did not mean rejection of broader gendered power relations. In this paper, Wearing discusses the women's personal resistance, and their struggle for time and space for their own leisure, in terms of resistance to aspects of the "ideology of motherhood," and to "the dominant discourse on motherhood" (p. 38). Thus, there seems to be a collective dimension to Wearing's use of the term resistance, at least in this particular study.

This suggests that the two "sides" of this debate (i.e., the structuralists versus the post-structuralists) are not as far apart theoretically as strict definitions of these two approaches might suggest. Indeed, it could be argued that the concept of resistance might bring together researchers from different theoretical perspectives, not only structuralists and post-structuralists, but also interactionists, who are interested in women's leisure. Leisure as resis-

tance is firmly centered on the notion that individual women have agency, but the need for resistance is also based on the assumption that oppression, inequities and constraints exist, and that these are related to gender as well as to other material conditions of life. Moreover, if there are aspects of oppression and constraint that are shared among women or among groups of women, individual acts of resistance clearly have implications beyond the individual as well. Thus, incorporating the notion of resistance as both individual and collective would seem to be an important aspect of the conceptualization of this term.

One possible way forward to avoid the difficulty of either assuming shared oppression among all women, or assuming total individualization, is for researchers to be more vigilant in specifying the nature of oppression or constraint that is being resisted. That is, researchers could clarify whether the types of constraints being resisted relate to women in general, or to particular women in particular circumstances. In a study of resistance among older First Nations women in Canada, Beveridge (1999) explored the nature of oppression and the types of problems experienced by these women, as well as instances of resistance. It became clear through the analysis that resistant acts were directed against particular forms of oppression. For example, some types of resistance (e.g., participation in traditional First Nations activities) were directed towards the problems of acculturation and the denigration of cultural identity, while other types of resistance (e.g., self-care, independence, and the rejection of some aspects of grand motherhood) were aimed at challenging constraints related to access to time and space for leisure. In addition, certain types of leisure activity, including affiliative leisure, and leisure with a therapeutic orientation, promoted resistance through a focus on self and on the positive aspects of community. This process of specifying types of oppression, types of resistance, and the linkages between the two has the potential to enhance understanding of resistance. It allows for a complex analysis which focuses on both common and diverse form of powerlessness and constraint. Moreover, linking resistance to oppression also allows analysis of individual acts of resistance, while at the same time directing attention towards the common or collective implications of such acts.

What are the Outcomes of Resistance?

The individual and collective nature of resistance also relates to the issue of outcomes. Where the focus is on individual acts of resistance, the question of outcome would revolve around whether that individual was able to be negotiate, reduce, or remove the power exerted over her by others. On the other hand, where the issue is collective action or resistance, the outcome implications are much broader and more complex, and would include such questions as whether new discourses, beliefs, or viewpoints have been forged, or whether dominant ideologies have been weakened. Further, given the argument that resistance is both individual and collective, any one act of

resistance would be expected to have both individual and collective outcomes. For example, an individual girl's struggle to be allowed to participate on a boys' hockey, soccer, or football team may lead to her personal empowerment. At the same time it will be seen by other girls. These girls, in turn, may adopt the resistant behavior themselves, or may begin to question and challenge their own or others' assumptions about the appropriateness of girls' participation in "boys' sports". This could lead to new discourses among the young people involved, and possibly among others as well, about masculinity, femininity and sports. Further, this could extend to issues about gendered behavior, appearance expectations, and gendered inequities in opportunities and in the provision of activities as well.

Most of the research that has looked at outcomes of participation in resistant or non-conforming activities has utilized an individual social psychological approach. For example, resistance to cultural gender-role prescriptions, through participation in traditionally "masculine" activities such as sports, has been shown to have psychological and developmental benefits for girls and women (Kleiber & Kane, 1985; Shaw, Kleiber, & Caldwell, 1995). Bialeschki and Michener's (1994) research on women reaching the "full circle" of motherhood, though not specifically about resistance, also illustrates the benefit of self-care for women who resist the traditional prescription of caring for others. Further, in Freysinger and Flannery's (1992) study of adult women, as well as in Wearing's (1992) study of adolescents, leisure as resistance was found to benefit individuals in a number of ways, including an enhanced sense of self, the development of new self-affirming identities, and increased feelings of self worth.

Much less attention has been paid to the issue of social change as an outcome of resistance activities. This is surprising in some ways, because this issue is clearly central to feminist objectives (especially to structuralism feminists), and individual and collective resistance through leisure is one potential route to positive change. On the other hand, social change is clearly a more difficult type of outcome to document, since it would involve looking at changing behaviors, changing discourses among different groups, and changing perspectives on dominant ideologies. Nevertheless, a better understanding of the outcome of resistance activities would seem to be called for, as well as an examination of the linkages between individual and collective outcomes.

Consideration of outcomes raises the question of whether resistance should be defined or conceptualized according to outcome or impact. In other words, should an act, practice or activity be seen as resistance if it leads to personal empowerment and/or particular types of social change? Some researchers seem to imply that this is the case. For example, Freysinger and Flannery (1992) seem to suggest that self-determined leisure is resistance because it leads to personal empowerment, and Wearing (1992) implies that some sports activities are resistance because they lead to new femininities. However, to incorporate the idea of outcome as an essential component of resistance is problematic. This is because acts that are intended as challenges

to dominant power relations could potentially disempower rather than empower individuals. This situation could occur, for example through failure to reach one's objective, disengagement with the activity, or regret over one's actions. Intentional challenges could also lead to a retrenchment of dominant ideologies or attitudes among other people in some circumstances, rather than to a weakening of such ideologies. Particular individual or social change outcomes, then, cannot be seen as defining characteristics of resistance. Indeed, resistant acts could be "successful" or "unsuccessful" in terms of intended outcomes, or could be contradictory, or a mixture of different types of outcome. Previous research has shown, for example, that some situations, such as the gendering of secondary school physical education practices, can foster both resistance and reproduction in different individuals simultaneously (Chepyator-Thomson & Ennis, 1997). Also, particular activities, for example women's body building (Guthrie & Castelnovo, 1992), can be seen as contradictory because of fostering both compliance and resistance to dominant discourses about gender.

This analysis suggests that there is a need to explore the question of outcomes of resistance both theoretically and empirically. Foucault's conceptualization of resistance has been criticized for failing to distinguish between ineffective and effective acts or outcomes (Grimshaw, 1993), although such distinctions would seem to be crucially important. Careful attention to different types of outcome (e.g., more versus less successful, impact on behavior versus attitudes or discourses; affect on individual actors versus those who watch) could help to overcome such problems. Moreover, linking an analysis of outcomes to the idea of individual versus collective resistance, and taking into account specific types of oppression and constraint that are being resisted (as discussed earlier) is also needed. Thus, while outcome may not be a defining characteristic of resistance, it is clearly an important consideration.

Is Resistance Intentional?

The previous discussion of outcomes, and the suggestion that dominant power relations can be challenged and weakened without any one individual deliberately seeking to bring about such change, raises the question of intent. Specifically, the implication is that resistance is not necessarily an act of conscious deliberation or intent. Some acts of resistance are clearly deliberate, perhaps the most obvious example of this being a group or collective decision to challenge roles or expectations about behavior or appearance. On the other hand, some acts may not be intentional, or the decision to act, for example to participate in an activity which is not deemed to be "feminine", may not have been motivated by any particular desire to challenge the ideology of femininity.

As with the issue of outcomes, the question of intent is also a complex one. First, the suggestion that resistance is both individual and collective

means that intentions may relate to one or both levels. That is, individuals may be seeking to expand their range of choice of activity or behavior, to develop new identities or self-presentations, and/or to enhance their personal power. Alternatively, or additionally, they may be seeking to influence others' behaviors and attitudes, to change discourses around gender, femininity, or motherhood, and/or to challenge sexist ideologies or male power. Further, such motivations or intentions may be important and central, or could be minor and peripheral in any particular decision making process. Moreover, intentions are not necessarily static and uni-dimensional. Rather, as the situation evolves, intentions may change, and may become fluid or contradictory.

Freysinger and Flannery (1992) suggest that "resistance may exist along a continuum of intentionality and consciousness" (p. 316). They also suggest that intent should not be considered to be a defining characteristic of resistance, since empowerment could occur through participation in certain activities, such as self-determined activities, devoid of any conscious intent to bring about change. Indeed, activities which may well influence discourses and ideologies about gender—such as the development of women's professional sports, and (in North America) women's recent participation in highly competitive "male" sports such as hockey or rugby—cannot necessarily be characterized as intentional resistance on the part of participants. Theberge's (2000) extensive field research on women's hockey suggests that while participation may be a highly positive experience for the players, there is little recognition of, or acknowledgment of, the politics of gender among these women athletes. In this case, participation may have been a conscious choice for personal development and enhanced opportunities, but not a deliberate attempt to influence discourses about femininity or gender.

Following this line of argument, and consistent with the previous analysis of outcomes, other kinds of leisure situations and contexts could be included within the notion of resistance. For example, media images and messages could constitute resistance, without any intent at all on the part of owners or producers. Television programs, characters or advertisements which promote counter-hegemonic viewpoints would fall into such a category. Such programs could well promote a sympathetic understanding of issues of racism, sexism, disability, or homophobia, and challenge dominant discourses, even though the primary intent of the producer was simply market appeal or an improvement in ratings.

It can be seen, then, that the question of intent suggests that there are different forms of resistance which need to be taken into consideration. The notion of resistance clearly includes deliberate acts of individual and/or collective empowerment (whether or not such acts are seen to have "successful" outcomes). However, other situations may also be considered to be resistance if they function to empower individuals in disadvantaged situations, or to challenge dominant views and discourses around gender or other relations of power, even if unintended.

Conclusion

The assumption underlying this paper is that the idea of resistance is an important concept for understanding the role of leisure both in people's individual lives and in society as a whole. The idea of resistance focuses attention on the political nature of leisure, an aspect of leisure which is not always recognized or understood. While the political implications of leisure practice may often be negative, in the sense of reinforcing dominant ideologies and discriminatory beliefs and messages (Jacobson & Samdahl, 1998; Shaw, 1996), resistance spotlights the positive political repercussions of leisure, including individual empowerment, as well as social change based on equity, recognition of, and respect for, disadvantaged populations. In this way, resistance can be seen as a "benefit" of leisure, although the type of benefit provided is different in kind from those typically associated with leisure participation, such as physical and psychological well-being (Driver, Brown, & Peterson, 1991).

Despite the potential importance of leisure as resistance, a clear conceptualization of the process of resistance has remained elusive. Reference to resistance can be found in the leisure literature over the last decade, especially in the literature on women's leisure, but little attention has been paid to the meaning or definition of this concept. Part of the problem in seeking a clear conceptualization of resistance has been that researchers doing work in this area, including those interested in women's leisure as resistance, come from different theoretical perspectives. Researchers with a post-structuralist orientation differ in the way they think about resistance compared to those with a more structuralist or interactionist perspective. Such differences relate to the emphasis put on structured relations of power and societal change versus personal power or individual experiences, benefits or subjectivities.

Nevertheless, these different views of resistance do contain some commonalities, and are not necessarily contradictory. It is clear, for example, that the notion of women's resistance involves individual agency in acts that challenge or resist the oppression or constraint experienced in everyday life. In addition, most researchers would agree that despite diversity among women, and differences in life experiences and situations, it is not appropriate to individualize the problems faced. Rather, some types of oppression and constraint are shared among certain communities of women (e.g., among working class women, or women with disabilities, or women who are lesbians), while other constraints, such as those arising out of dominant ideologies of femininity or of motherhood, may be more widely shared. Therefore, it can be argued that resistance to oppression is collective as well as individual: one person's resistance may well have implications and outcomes that affect others in similar circumstances, and collective acts of resistance affect individuals.

The analysis of outcomes and intentionality, in this paper, has indicated that there may be different forms or types of resistance. Specifically, resis-

tance may vary in the degree to which it is intentional. And where there is prior intent, this may be directed towards individual outcomes, such as personal freedom and empowerment, and/or towards collective outcomes, such as weakening dominant discourses or ideologies of gender, challenging sexism, and reducing inequities between women and men. In addition, resistance may also vary in the degree to which it is successful. Positive outcomes may result at the individual level, or at the collective level, or both, or the intent to challenge gendered power relations may be unsuccessful. This means that resistance cannot be characterized or defined either by intent or by outcome. Intentional acts to resist may be more or less successful, and successful resistance can occur without prior intent.

This analysis helps to provide an initial framework for conceptualizing and researching the roles, meanings, processes, and ways in which leisure can act as a form of resistance. Based on the initial understanding of resistance as both an individual and collective process, it is suggested that future research needs to focus on three different, but inter-related aspects of this process. First, there is a need to document not only the types of leisure activities and contexts in which resistance occurs, but the specific types of oppression and constraint that are being challenged or resisted. Second, a greater understanding of the role of intent is needed, including the level of conscious intent in any particular situation of resistance, as well as type of intent, and the changing and potentially contradictory nature of such intentions. Third, there needs to be greater attention to the different types of outcome of specific acts of resistance, and to the inter-relationships between type of oppression, intention, and outcome.

This discussion of resistance has focused primarily on women's leisure and on resistance to gendered power relations. However, the framework developed here could be applied to other forms of resistance as well. That is, leisure can also be a context for resistance to racism or homophobia, or to oppressions and constraints associated with disability, age, or social class. Men may also use leisure to resist narrow and restrictive definitions of masculinity (Shaw, 1999b). More research on these forms of resistance, as well as on women's leisure as resistance, will help to enhance our understanding of leisure as a form of political practice. In particular, a focus on resistance has the potential to provide important insights into the ways in which leisure practice can empower and improve the lives of individuals, as well as the ways in which leisure can help to bring about broader social change.

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