

Turing Points in the *Journal of Leisure Research*—The First 20 Years

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Depending on your point of view, I am a newcomer to the *Journal of Leisure Research* (JLR). My formal involvement with the JLR goes back to 1993 when I was asked to serve as an associate editor for the journal. The journal was already in its 25th year of publication! A year later I had an article of my own appear in the journal. I was appointed Editor of JLR in 2001 and served two-three year terms (2002-2007). However, I was very familiar with JLR long before I began reviewing manuscripts and submitting articles of my own. I read numerous articles from JLR during my doctoral work. Like many hopeful scholars, I dared to hope that my ideas might find expression in what many people regarded as the preeminent leisure journal in the world.

As I look back at the journal's 40-year history, I am simply awed by the quality and diversity of manuscripts. The journal has thrived and clearly succeeded in its goal of being an outlet for the multidisciplinary study of leisure. The field of leisure studies has changed a great deal since the journal began publication in 1969. A great deal of that change has occurred in the pages of JLR. Indeed, the journal has published many articles that have fundamentally shaped our thinking about leisure. My goal in this article is to highlight 5 articles from the first 20 years of the journal that I believe served as turning points in our understanding of leisure.

A few disclaimers are in order before I proceed. First, I have limited my choice of articles to ones that preceded my formal involvement in editing and writing for peer review. Thus, my focus is on early articles that stimulated my thinking about leisure. Second, I recognize that my choices are entirely subjective and reflect my interest areas. Others would surely (and appropriately) highlight the importance of other articles that had a formative influence on leisure studies. Third, space limits my ability to survey additional articles. There are dozens of influential articles from the early years and I apologize to individuals who feel slighted because I have not highlighted their work. Finally, the articles I review have all been cited extensively by other scholars. This means that there is some consensus among leisure scholars that these articles have been influential.

The first article I want to highlight comes from Volume 1 of the journal. It was written by William Burch, Jr. (1969) and remains an important sociological contribution to leisure scholarship. Burch theorized that leisure choices are shaped "by the social circles of workmates, family and friends" (p. 138). Burch provided empirical support that preferences for styles of camping were shaped by childhood socialization *and* the interpersonal transactions that occur within families and among friends. Although this finding seems rather straightforward today, Burch's ideas challenged conventional

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wisdom in his day that leisure choices were a function of people's need to seek compensation from the tensions of modern life or their desire to seek familiar experiences across different life domains. It is also worth noting Burch's work provides a useful and overlooked example of grounded theory using *quantitative* data. My experiences as JLR editor, associate editor, reviewer, and a longtime consumer of leisure research have led me to conclude that leisure scholars assume that grounded theory is created using qualitative data only. Glaser and Strauss (1967) thought otherwise (see Chapter VIII of their book) and Burch's seminal work remains an important example to the contrary.

The publication of Bryan's (1977) ideas about recreational specialization was a major turning point in outdoor recreation research. A key premise of his work is that participants involved in the same activity can be arranged along a *continuum* of involvement from "casual" to "committed." Bryan believed that along the continuum there are characteristic styles of participants that can be represented in the form of a typology. His notion of the "specialist," for example, described an intense style of outdoor recreation participation and anticipated Stebbins' (1992) ideas about serious leisure. Another important premise of Bryan's work was that individuals have *careers* in their leisure pursuits. He believed that people progressed to higher stages of involvement the longer they participated in the activity. He also theorized that progression would entail a change in motivations, resource preferences, and attitudes about management practices. Bryan's ideas have been quoted extensively and have spurred researchers to explore variability among participants in a wide range of outdoor pursuits, including birdwatching, boating, backpacking, camping, fishing, hunting, rock climbing, and scuba diving. His ideas have even been used to explore variability among card players, dancers, and heritage tourists. Bryan's ideas endure because they were intuitive and effectively connected theory and practical application.

Another key turning point in leisure research occurred when JLR published Jacob and Schreyer's article in 1980 about the causes of recreation conflict in outdoor settings. Jacob and Schreyer defined conflict "as goal interference attributed to another's behavior" (p. 369) and they identified four major factors that contribute to conflict. Two of these factors—activity styles and resource specificity—involve differences in the personal meanings and commitments that individuals ascribe to activities and outdoor recreation places. Jacob and Schreyer also theorized that conflict may stem from differences in how individuals seek to experience natural environments. The last major factor they identified pertained to individuals' tolerance for lifestyle diversity: outdoor recreation participants may experience conflict when they encounter individuals deemed to be undesirable. Jacob and Schreyer's article provided leisure studies its first comprehensive theory of recreation conflict. There are few empirical investigations today about conflict among outdoor recreation participants that do not begin their investigation by citing Jacob and Schreyer's pioneering work. It is worth noting that Jacob and Schreyer's ideas are robust enough that they can be readily applied to leisure activities and settings that fall outside the bailiwick of outdoor recreation. To my knowledge, this has not yet occurred.

In 1981, JLR published an article that examined the reasons why people stopped participating in sports. The article, written by Boothby, Tungatt, and Townsend, was among the first published articles that examined systematically what we know refer to

as leisure constraints. The authors identified a myriad of factors that contributed to activity cessation. What is noteworthy about the article, however, is that Boothby et al. condensed the different factors into two major dimensions. The first was personal factors and included diminished skills and interest. The second was social factors which entailed external commitments (e.g., “impact of work on disposable time”), lack of facility access, and a breakdown in social networks. The article not only stimulated researchers’ thinking about constraints, it provided a useful and lasting categorization scheme for theorizing about the way different factors contribute to non-participation in leisure activities. It is important to note that the terms “barriers” and “constraints” appeared in neither the title nor the keywords of the article. This leads me to wonder if future leisure scholars will overlook this important piece in their respective reviews of the constraints literature.

The last article I will cite was written by Henderson, Stalnaker, and Taylor (1988), which examined the relationship between leisure constraints and gender-role personality traits among women. This article was a turning point in the leisure literature because it brought to light the unique constraints that make leisure problematic for many women. Henderson and her colleagues reported that women with stereotypic masculine personalities reported fewer constraints to leisure than women who with more stereotypic feminine personalities. The latter were more constrained by a poor body image, a lack of interest, a lack of skills, a lack of information, and an inability to make decisions. The article was extremely important as it demonstrated that many of the constraints that women confront (e.g., body image and lack of interest) are *antecedent* and actually lead women to define leisure activities and locales as inappropriate or unavailable. The article was also important because it gave voice to an emerging cadre of feminist scholars in leisure studies. Arguably, no other theoretical framework has changed our understanding of leisure phenomena as has feminism. Henderson et al.’s article from JLR helped paved the way.

As a former editor, I can not say with certainty which articles, if any, that were published under my watch will change fundamentally how current and future scholars think about and study leisure. I hope there are some! For now, I celebrate past contributions and applaud past editorial boards for making JLR the outstanding publication it is today.

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