



Is Academia a Site of Struggle? A Critical Analysis of Resistance Scholarship in Leisure Studies

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Received: 24 August 2023 / Accepted: 20 May 2024
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Abstract

Scholars have long recognized that injustice pervades recreation and leisure. Some scholars have framed leisure activities or research as a meaningful response to injustice, a body of research we term resistance studies. However, this body of research has grown without a corresponding rise in analyses of unjust social structures. Given that injustice is rooted in the social structure, critical analysis of the resistance studies literature is needed to determine if the field is tackling the oppression and domination of people. We address this gap through a systematic review of the resistance studies literature in leisure journals. The review was guided by the following questions: (a) what theoretical or conceptual frameworks have authors used to guide their investigations of resistance, (b) what are the targets of resistance (i.e., that which is being resisted), and (c) what acts are presented as resistance. We argue that many of the articles reviewed did not ground resistance historically or conceptually. Without such conceptual grounding, it was difficult for us to see how leisure activities or research could be an effective counter to injustice. We encourage future scholars to ground their work in non-Western thinkers who mapped social structures and worked for material change. The relevance of leisure activities to material change remains to be seen.

Keywords Justice · Struggle · Recreation

Injustice pervades recreation and leisure. For example, leisure participants have brought the consequences of injustice elsewhere in their lives into their experiences

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of participation or nonparticipation. Some leisure practitioners have ignored and reified those consequences and in so doing perpetrated injustice. Other leisure practitioners have directly responded to injustice and positioned themselves as agents of change. Indeed, the lack of scholarly attention to the leisure history of Asian American, Latino/a/Latinx, and indigenous populations makes it difficult to gauge issues of participation or nonparticipation among some minoritized groups. This paucity in historical knowledge only increases for Black, Asian, Latino/a, and indigenous (if they are not also Black, Asian, or Latino/a), if we move beyond the United States and consider other centers of long-standing leisure-based scholarship, such as Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. To give another example, injustice also persists during leisure employment. Historical scholarship has shown that the controlled presence of Black residents and citizens of the United States in leisure settings as laborers or servants (e.g., Tuck, 2010), but not participants, was foundational to the appeal of leisure to many early 20th century Americans.

Some scholars have framed leisure activities or research as a meaningful response to injustice, a body of research we term resistance studies. This line of inquiry grew out of Wearing's (1990) work which explored leisure as a domain in which Australian mothers resisted dominant expectations of motherhood. Resistance found leisure-based theoretical support in Shaw's (2001) work which suggested that "...leisure behaviors, settings and interactions can challenge the way in which power is exercised, making leisure a form of political practice" (p. 186). Since then, resistance has become a concept of interest, buoyed in part by a turn toward social justice in leisure studies (Floyd, 2014). The "popularity" and greater awareness of injustices over the past 10 years was also driven by events, such as the Flint water crisis in 2014, the Charleston church shooting in 2015, Britain leaving the European Union in 2016, 600,000 Rohingya refugees flee ethnic cleansing in Myanmar in 2017, the reckoning of the #MeToo Movement in 2018, the Hong Kong protests in 2019, the police shootings of George Floyd and Brianna Taylor in 2020, the storming of the U.S. Capitol building in 2021, and the invasion of the Ukraine in 2022, whether or not they directly related to leisure.

However, structural injustice has rarely been investigated in leisure studies (Floyd & Stodolska, 2019; Philipp, 2000). Young (2011) defined structures as "a set of socially caused *conditions* that position a large number of people in similar ways. Nevertheless, each person so positioned is responsible for how he or she takes up those conditions" (p. 18). Example conditions might include the market for rental properties in a given area or the policies which dictate renters and owner's rights. Dominant research foci such as investigations of what leisure is, who has it, and the consequences for those who do not have leisure (Kivel, 2018) may have obscured the importance of structural analyses. Given that injustice is rooted in social structures (Young, 2011), the lack of structural analyses raises important questions for resistance studies scholarship. For example, to what extent are these studies addressing the material needs of people or tackling the oppression and domination of people? If this scholarship is doing this type of intellectual work, can we elevate its importance? Or, if this scholarship is not doing this type of intellectual work, can we aid in calling for clarity and precision?

We address these questions through a systematic review of resistance studies scholarship in leisure journals. Our review was guided by the following questions: (a) what theoretical or conceptual frameworks have authors used to guide their investigations of resistance, (b) what are the targets of resistance (i.e., that which is being resisted), and (c) what acts are presented as resistance? Next, we describe the body of literature we term resistance studies. Then, we critique resistance studies research in the interest of building capacity to achieve its advertised aims. We begin our critique by mapping the conceptual terrain of resistance studies.

1 What is Resistance Studies?

As noted above, resistance studies is composed of scholarship which positions leisure activities as a meaningful response to injustice. In this section, injustice is defined and differentiated from other related terms such as oppression, domination, and discrimination. In the next section, some possible responses to injustice are defined.

1.1 What is Injustice?

In the seminal work, *Justice and the politics of difference*, Young (1990) stated that social justice is a distributive paradigm that promotes “fairness in the distribution of goods...participating in forming and running institutions...and perspective on [a] social life in contexts where others can listen” (p. 37). Justice, for Young (1990) is driven by “the value of meeting material needs” (p. 37). Thus, injustice is the social condition that results from “domination, the institutional constraint on self-development” (p. 37).

Injustice is produced in part through oppression and domination which are institutional processes of prevention and institutional conditions that inhibit both accessing resources that can satisfy material needs and people from satisfying their needs on their own (Young, 1990). While discrimination (that which impacts groups at the institutional level) can produce injustice its influence is not felt to the same extent as oppression and domination (i.e., that which impacts populations at the societal level). Furthermore, individual prejudice is not the root of oppression. The acquisition of gains over denials fuels discrimination in a societal view (accumulation of wealth). The Jim Crow era in the United States created a division of class and a division of labor based along racial lines. In most leisure settings, Black citizens of the United States either were servants (bellhops, maids, valets, landscapers) or barred from accessing leisure settings (de jure segregation).

However, we typically devolve discrimination to the mistreatment of one by another, often times in relationship to matters of justice, or injustice. In contrast, oppression is the persistence of a form of governance and social control over a selected group within a total population. While Jim Crow segregation has ended in the United States, neighborhoods across the United States that are often underfunded or under allocated, especially linked to recreational services, remain predominantly Black.

While some may connect discrimination as an integral ingredient of oppression, this is not necessarily the case. The overall stereotypical image of a group may change thereby impacting the amount and frequency of discrimination. The Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia where the Masters Tournament is held, has historically barred both women across racial categories and Black gendered men. However, since the 1990s, women and men across a wide-range of ethnic groups have guests to play (i.e., Tiger Woods) and the all-White male membership barrier has been broken (in 1990 with Ron Townsend and in 2012 with Condoleezza Rice and Darla Moore) (Nylund, 2003). Yet even perceived “fair” treatment can still result in oppression as self-determination has been stripped from the lesser-treated group. In the same state of Georgia, the Gullah-Geechee people of African descent have had to file lawsuits against a lack of government services resulting in the erosion of their land, private interest unlawfully acquiring their land for tourism development, as well as fighting at the federal level to maintain the recognition of the coastal Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor that stretches across four U.S. states (Ghahramani et al., 2020). Resistance then is a response to the experiences of discrimination or oppression. Therefore, we argue that resistance to discrimination and resistance to oppression may also require some distinction.

In addition, oppression can get us closer to understanding why a population throughout a city or a nation-state is likely to experience a certain set of social conditions. With this understanding, we ask (among other questions) within this manuscript, why are structural analyses of oppression so rare? Young (2011) suggested that understanding how a structure operates and functions is paramount for correcting course or creating proper alternatives. While knowledge of a structure’s existence and awareness of its operation are vital, individuals and groups must also be aware of ways to exercise our individual and collective responsibility for change for social justice to become possible (Young, 2011).

1.2 Possible Responses to Injustice

Leisure scholars have explored several possible responses to injustice, the most common of which have been resistance, dismantling, decolonization, and abolition. Each of these terms have a variety of academic usages and our intention is not to conduct an exhaustive review of each concept below. Instead, our intention in this section is to contrast common academic usages of resistance, decolonization, dismantling, and abolition with the definitions employed by activists and others who have fought for these ideals in their everyday lives. Our point is not that one or another definition of a given term is correct or “the” definition. Instead, our intention is to demonstrate that when the material conditions of everyday life are the focal point, each term takes on a very different, very elusive meaning when it comes to impacting the conditions that cause the harm, do the damage, and create the oppression in which people live within.

- a. Resistance – While generic dictionary definitions may settle on acts of refusals, the invocation of resistance as a term gained wider prominence during the first year of the 45th President in the United States. This invocation suggested that it should be seen as something more even if many of the examples of the time

remained similar to standard dictionary definitions. However, resistance is understood as a deliberate political action of disobedience to official authority, laws, and government (Hoffman, 1971; Thoreau, 1992). There have been examples of calls and actions of resistance to adopting the tenets and behaviors of a dominant cultural power. Consider for example the height of the anti-war movement in the United States and Canada and the eventual creation of pan-ethnic identity terms like Asian American borne from what would become the Asian American Political Alliance as well as the Third World Liberation Front (Le Espiritu, 1992; Maeda, 2009). However, the emphasis has historically been on collective action, as that which you and others are resisting must ultimately become aware of your action because the purpose is to instigate a stop of authoritative action (e.g., the build-up and coordination in the action against the Dakota Access Pipeline from 2014-present; Estes, 2019).

- b. Dismantling – Dismantling implies a structure that must be confronted, metaphorically and literally. While some early usage of the term was associated with confrontations with racism (Barndt, 1991), dismantling is most prominently connected to White Supremacy. Nonetheless, dismantling has also been used to target a wide array of structures: White privilege, the system, heteronormativity, school-to-prison pipeline, cash bail, patriarchy, Race¹, gender, class, and the U.S. military. However, just as dismantling implies a structure to be confronted, equally so, that confrontation requires collectivity, organization, and union (Kramer, 1989; Luxemburg, 2004). A structure is necessary to properly analyze the power (power structural analysis) that one is up against in order to determine the proper resources to use against it (McAlevy, 2016). What are you up against? Who is most affected by this power? What actions will be taken? For how long? Who will do it? Why must it be done? There are “three key variables [that] are crucial to analyzing the potential for success in the change process: power, strategy, and engagement” (McAlevy, 2016, p. 6).
- c. Decolonization – In one line of reading, decolonizing as a term in academia² dates back to Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) seminal work, *Decolonizing*

¹ Many citation formats and academic professional associations have encouraged or required authors to capitalize racial categories (e.g., American Psychological Association, 2022; National Institutes of Health, 2024). We take it a step further to also capitalize “Race” to differentiate it from “race” as in racing. As a specific categorical term to classify people and populations, it is not arbitrary and is specific (a Pronoun rather than a noun).

² We are making the distinction that this signaled a “turn” from decolonization being something outside of the academic spaces yet studied by academics to decolonizing, decolonization, and decolonize becoming appropriated by academia as something that can be done within and through academia. In the once seminal, but seemingly forgotten text, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o was not writing for academics nor Westerners (in fact, he use this book to take a stand to never write in English after this book). While wa Thiong’o may have served as a professor, he is not working “within” academia for this book. wa Thiong’o was heavily influenced by Fanon who had drafted the seminal decolonizing text, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) while actively working with the Algerian Liberation Front, through armed struggle. The citation of Fanon in this note and in our article cuts to our point, decolonization has lost a tangible liberatory focus and has now become its own cottage industry of books and articles, conferences and symposia, and TED Talks and how-to kits in academia. The ending of colonialism, beyond the scope of leisure studies, is sadly violent, devastating, and tragic because the colonizing entity will not let go of a colony freely. De-colonization is the ending of colonialism and there is no evidence despite the amount of

Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples. Smith shifts the focus and perspective to indigenous peoples of the world since decolonizing is grounded in the very colonies that have exterminated, displaced, and dispossessed on every continent. Yet, this work also shifted the site of work within academia, academic spaces, and academic writing/reading. Smith (1999) admits that, “there is a more political body of writing, however, which extends to the revolutionary, anti-colonial work of...Frantz Fanon” (p. 23). Work in the realm of (new, indigenous) literature for constructing a (new, national) culture, comes “after liberation” (Smith, 1999, p. 29). Thus, academics are at an impasse as one strand of understanding decolonization implores the need for new cultural activity within the standing colony (i.e., a colony that still exists³) and the other strand is firmly understanding it to be about ending the existence of the colony, something far beyond the sphere of academia. Decolonization is a process that happens as the colony falls or flees, not an action that can be initiated (“the spectacular flight of capital” on p. 102 in Fanon, 2004). The process of decolonization ought to be understood as the cleanup not the table setting.

- d. Abolition – Lastly, while abolition as a term has regained some measure of awareness and usage over the past few years since the 1960s, it too, has strands that are opposed to each other. Abolition in the present has been uttered in relationship to prisons, policing, the Supreme Court, and the State. In the 1960s, abolition resurfaced within prisons by political prisoners and politicized prisoners that formed the earliest versions of organizations such A.I.M. (American Indian Movement, Black Guerilla Family) and as a site to expand other organizations (Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Weatherman Underground) (Davis, 2003; Jackson, 1972; Smith & Warrior, 1997). In many cases, this moved to the world outside prison through politicized gangs and then eventually the broader public (Fernandez, 2019). Each called for not only the end of prisons but for the greater liberation of people in the outside world. We say regained in the 1960s, as abolition is most historically associated with first the movement for revolt by enslaved populations (the Haitian Revolutions) and then later as a movement for reform (in the United Kingdom and the United States) (Getachew, 2019). But those who waged abolitionist struggles turned anti-colonialist struggles of the 1700s and 1800s did debate the merits and limits of abolition as nation changing

academic decolonization literature will bring such a thing to fruition, however, there is a mountain of literature by non-academics who engaged in active struggle that did bring out the end of the colony.

³ A standing colony is one that still exists, regardless of whether it has lessened its articulations of Race and gender discrimination or provided access/shared governance of land with indigenous populations. A coloniality is in the mind of colonized and colonizer, wa Thiong’o and Smith, but the difference between the two is that wa Thiong’o was talking to those in the former colony to give up the old colonial mentality (hence why it is a good post-colonial theory text) while more contemporary readers and thinkers in the academy are suggesting (at times) a by-passing of the colony coming to an end as the key process of decolonization. wa Thiong’o’s book is based on the need for work post-liberation from colonization, and resistance is not liberation. But we have presented enough evidence to lean in favor of decolonization being what any word with the “de” should mean (the end, the opposite). To cite decolonization definitions currently use would contradict every single point that we are making, the current definitions fly in the face of the old definitions and the old definitions still hold true because colonies still do what they have always done: extract and dispossess to people and land.

(different from society changing), and they turned their eyes away from abolition and embraced full-on anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle (Getachew, 2019). Prison, slavery, and anything else is just the “what” of abolition, the point of abolition must be the end of that “what”.

From an understanding of the above definitions, descriptions, and explanations, a number of questions arise. Can I resist or is it that the collective we have to resist? Are we dismantling structures that do a certain oppressive work or is the issue a matter of the whole society? Can a colony be de-colonized while it still exists as the colony? Is abolition about ideational imaginaries or material change of collective basic needs and conditions? These questions merit exploration in another manuscript. For now, we turn our attention to past critiques of leisure research; which we use to argue that a critique of the resistance studies literature is warranted.

1.3 The Need for a Critique of Resistance Studies

Social psychology has exerted a large influence on leisure studies scholarship, both in terms of the research foci and corresponding explanations of those foci (Kivel et al., 2009). Coalter (1997) argued that the sociopsychological leisure sciences, particularly in the United States and Canada, produces analyses devoid of society. More specifically, social psychological approaches to leisure studies create significant barriers to understanding injustice, oppression, and domination which are at the heart of resistance studies. For example, the social psychological perspectives on leisure studies frame human actors as the cause, culprit, and solution to social issues. The individual represents their gender, their Race, their social class, their orientation, etc. However, in this critique we are not suggesting that we are merely victims to (similarly reduced) larger forces but instead that the complexity of how those forces operate is lost in our social psychological perspectives on leisure.

Racism and patriarchy provide two examples of the consequences of social psychological perspectives to an understanding of injustice, oppression, and domination. What is the exact function of racism? In *The Golden Gulag* (2007), Ruth Wilson Gilmore asked: why choose to build prisons in California when anything else can be built? The answer for Gilmore is that the racism is (and operates as) “the state-sanctioned and/or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (p. 247). And what is the exact function of patriarchy? In *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), Silvia Federici thinks through formation of capitalism as the privatization of land that liberated capital to now seize it and convert it from a site of public subsistence (land as the commons) to a site of accumulation and exploitation seizure of land (women as the commons). Federici pointedly deduced that this conversion facilitated, “the construction of a new patriarchal order where women’s bodies, their labor, their sexual and reproductive powers were placed under the control of the state and transformed into economic resources” (p. 170).

Thinking through Gilmore and Federici, this manuscript stands against a psychological thinking through social issues deriving from a collection of individuals, each of whom adds their unique perspective and contribution (attitudes and beliefs). As the definitions of patriarchy and racism suggest above, people are in-service to institu-

tions, systems, spheres (base and superstructure), and the State. Thus, it is imperative to understand how those institutions, systems, spheres, and ultimately, the State functions so that we can better understand the roles of individuals within them, their impacts upon the greater society, and the ways that people can actively work against them (Young, 2011).

To enter discussions or research of racism and patriarchy (or any other societal level force), sociology is one of the imperative disciplines that aids us to look at phenomena above the level of the individual. Individuals did not create racism and patriarchy; the formation of capitalist classes did (Engels, 2010). Yes, families exist, but what is their function in society? How were they formed? Why were they formed? A surface level focus gets us to think about social development, modelling of behaviors, and serving as a form of education on (problematic) social roles. But that is how they function for those individuals of that household and social group. Engels (2010) long since argued in his seminal work, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, that the family serves as the primary site of social control that reinforces the expectations of ruling classes and serves the most fundamental need of capitalism – more workers. Families set the tone and expectation for obedience in authority (Althusser & Balibar, 1970). Families in Western societies breaks the possibilities for stronger social bonds with others experiencing the same social conditions that do not reside in one's house nor hold any blood-relations. While this may not be the sole function of a family, it is undeniably a (sociological) societal-level explanation of that unit.

However, this manuscript is not grounded in any particular sociological or psychological framework. Psychological and social psychological frameworks can reveal important truths such as the consequences of oppression for an individual. Sociological frameworks can reveal equally important truths such as the roles of social structure in human behavior and flourishing. Nonetheless, if the intention of scholarship is not just to understand the world, but to change it, then only one starting point is sufficient: the material conditions of everyday life (Cabral, 2022).

Therefore, this work is grounded in materiality because material conditions must change if our efforts at resistance, decolonization, abolition, and dismantling can be thought of as successful. Our focus on materiality guides the analysis and discussion below.

2 Analytical Approach

The first goal of our critique is to describe the resistance studies literature. We address questions such as: which terminology is used (e.g., resistance, abolition, dismantling, decolonization, etc.)? Which theoretical perspectives are deployed? What are the targets of resistance studies? What are the means by which those targets are dismantled, resisted, abolished, decolonized or otherwise responded to? This description forms the foundation of the critique we offer later in the article.

Leisure Sciences, Leisure Studies, Loisir, Annals of Leisure Research, International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure, and *Scholé* were searched for articles which include the following words in the title, abstract, or keywords: resistance, dis-

mantling, decolonization, and abolition. We recognize that this approach excludes a number of potentially relevant works such as books or articles published outside of leisure studies. On balance, we believe that the reviewed journals provide substantive insight into how the academic discipline leisure studies has deployed resistance scholarship. Further, this study was limited to the search for evidence of the usage of these concepts. Some authors may have pursued similar aims with different terminology. However, finding these articles would be a longer undertaking and may not yield drastically different results (based on our reading of a representative sample of all articles).

The lead author conducted the initial keyword searches in the above journals. We agreed that the searches would not be limited by year of publication. We also agreed that each included study must clearly be concerned with injustice, oppression, or domination. Therefore,

apolitical uses of resistance ($n=19$) such as resistance to change (e.g., Schroeder et al., 2013) or resistance to price increases (e.g., Zou & Pitas, 2022) were excluded from the 238 papers met the initial search criteria. Although most ($n=11$) studies with an apolitical conceptualization of resistance were published before 2000, eight were published after 2000. Another 13 papers were excluded from the analysis because the authors did not provide enough information for us to clearly understand their position on resistance, such as in the case of book reviews or commentaries. Therefore, the final archive for this study was comprised of 206 papers.

3 Description of the Resistance Studies Literature

As shown in Table 1, there has been a marked increase in resistance research since 2003. Of the 206 articles which met the inclusion criteria, only 29 (14%) were published before 2003. Several developments may have contributed to the recent increase in popularity of resistance studies. First, developments in research and Race and gender highlighted the role that systems of power play in organized recreation experiences. Second, there has been a notable shift toward social justice within Leisure Studies following both Floyd (2014) and the 2013 Speaking Up, Speaking Out

Table 1 Chronological sorting of articles by publication

| | 2014-present | 2003–2013 | 2002 and earlier | Total |
|---|--------------|-----------|------------------|-------|
| Leisure Sciences | 28 | 9 | 2 | 39 |
| Leisure Studies | 38 | 24 | 7 | 69 |
| Annals of Leisure Research | 21 | 7 | 2 | 30 |
| Leisure/Loisir | 13 | 8 | 1 | 22 |
| Loisir et Societe | 4 | 1 | 11 | 16 |
| Journal of Leisure Research | 7 | 10 | 4 | 21 |
| International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Schole | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

conference held at the University of Utah. The shift toward social justice challenged leisure scholars to move beyond describing systems of injustice, to thinking and writing about how those systems can be and have been challenged by the oppressed. In addition, only two papers met the search criteria in Schole. Both papers utilized a variation of resistance as a keyword. This finding supports Mowatt's (2021) observation that critical research is rarely conducted on higher education in leisure studies. Given the ongoing contention that systems of power operate in leisure settings and the practical importance of educating the next generation of leisure professionals, our collective lack of attention to these issues is startling.

As shown in Table 2, the vast majority of returned results used resistance or a variation on that word. As such, there is considerable opportunity for leisure scholars to consider if and how concepts such as decolonize and abolition can be incitements to rethink leisure and the practice of leisure research.

The 206 papers are discussed below under two key themes: theoretical and atheoretical study of resistance.

4 Theoretical Study of Resistance

Wearing (1990), Shaw (2001), and Foucault (1980) were most often used by authors who conceptually grounded their work on resistance.

4.1 Wearing

Wearing (1990), though foundational to the study of resistance in leisure, was only cited in six papers. All of those papers framed leisure activities as a source of resistance, including roller derby (Pavlidis, 2013), romantic relationships, and activities at an LGBTQ recreation center (Theriault, 2014). However, the target of resistance was more diverse. For example, Raisborough and Bhatti (2007) used an autoethnographical account of gardening to expose the conceptual limits of describing behavior in terms of reproduction and resistance (see also Pavlidis, 2013). Theriault (2014) argued that an LGBTQ recreation center offered space to engage in individual (e.g., dating) and organizational acts (e.g., hosting a queer prom) that would be unsafe elsewhere. Herridge et al. (2003) noted that some women resist the leisure constraints that can emerge in the midst of a committed romantic relationship.

4.2 Shaw

Most authors ($n=22$) who grounded their work in an existing theoretical framework used Shaw's (1994, 2001, 2006) work. Shaw's work was primarily used to position leisure activities as acts of resistance. Some authors argued that leisure activities in general were forms of resistance (e.g., Cosgriff et al., 2009; Genoe, 2010, Parry, 2005), whereas others observed resistance in specific leisure activities including roller derby (Pavlidis, 2013), non-couple leisure (Herridge et al., 2003), gossip (McKeown, 2015), motorcycling (Roster, 2007), nightclub experiences (Kovac & Trussell, 2015), team sport (Ritondo & Trussell, 2023), women's roller derby (Parry,

Table 2 Term use in resistance studies

| | Resistance | Dismantle | Decolonize | Abolition | Colonial* |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Leisure Sciences | 30 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| Leisure Studies** | 55 | 2 | 4 | | 9 |
| Annals of Leisure Research | 21 | 1 | 6 | | 2 |
| Leisure/Loisir | 16 | | 1 | | 5 |
| Loisir et Societe | 12 | | | 1 | 3 |
| Journal of Leisure Research | 19 | 1 | | | 1 |
| International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure Schole | 4 | | | | 3 |
| | | | | | 2 |

* Authors utilized several variations on colonial, including: anti-colonial, post-colonial, neo-colonial, colonialistic, colonialism, colonized, settler colonial, and coloniality. Despite the important variations between these terms, we elected to present that data in one category for space reasons

** One paper used two keywords and was counted twice

2016), mountaineering (Doran et al., 2020), gaming (Delamere & Shaw, 2008), festivals (Sharpe, 2008), rave culture (Glover, 2003a), and out of school time activities (Brown et al., 2018).

Most authors framed gendered ideologies and/or leisure constraints as the targets of resistance (e.g., Cosgriff et al., 2009; Delamere & Shaw, 2008; Doran et al., 2020; Herridge et al., 2003; Parry, 2005, 2016; Petty & Trussell, 2021; Ritondo & Trussell, 2023; Roster, 2007). Other targets of resistance included racial (Shinew et al., 2004) leisure constraints, ableist and ageist stereotypes (Genoe, 2010), and general social change (Sharpe, 2008).

4.3 Foucault

Lastly, nine papers used Foucault's (1980) work on resistance as a conceptual framework. Six papers presented leisure activities as acts of resistance, including women's leisure (Shaw, 2001), snowboarding (Spowart et al., 2008), gaming (Delamere & Shaw, 2008), leisure among seniors (Wearing, 1995), leisure among young people who are visually impaired (Jessup et al., 2013), and leisure-oriented business creation (Golob & Giles, 2015). Rousell and Giles (2012) observed Aboriginal youth resisting surveillance efforts of lifeguards at a Canadian aquatic facility. Francombe (2014) observed resistance to dominant discourses on female appearance in the self care routines of young women at a private school in the West of England. Additional targets of resistance included: discrimination against Aboriginal users at a Canadian swimming pool (Rousell & Giles, 2012), ethnocultural barriers to leisure (Golob & Giles, 2015), dominant discourses on blindness (Jessup et al., 2013), dominant discourses on aging (Wearing, 1995), and gender-based leisure constraints (Spowart et al., 2008).

5 Atheoretical Study of Resistance

5.1 Leisure Activities as Acts of Resistance

121 papers framed specific leisure activities as resistance. The range of activities upheld as resistance suggests that there are few, if any, leisure activities which could not be used to resist injustice. Example activities offered as resistance include: multimedia performance (Rovito & Giles, 2016), quilting (Stalp, 2006), gardening (Glover, 2003b), gaming (Wearing et al., 2022), vacant lot beautification (Jeong et al., 2021), humor (Outley et al., 2021), Capoeira street circles (Martins et al., 2022), football (Farred, 2004), physical activity (Hall, 2022), adult play groups (Scott, 2018), dance (Irving & Giles, 2011), softball (Liechty et al., 2017), summer camp (Baker & Hannant-Minchel, 2022), demolition derby (Falls, 2013), sex tourism (Berdychevsky et al., 2015), Akido (Ganoë, 2019), and boxing (Beauchez, 2018) to name just a few examples. A small minority of scholars within this thematic area acknowledged the importance of individual actions and activities, but contextualized those actions within broader coalitions such as the International Solidarity (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009) or Slow Food Movements (Mair et al., 2008).

In most cases, scholars in this thematic suggested that leisure activities were a useful response to broadly defined structural injustices such as capitalism (Dawson, 1988), multinational media corporations (Rojek, 2005), heterosexism (Theriault, 2014), corporate capitalism (Robinson & Spracklen, 2019), ideologies of motherhood (Valtchanov et al., 2016), the intended use of space (Mayers & Glover, 2021), mass food production (Schmalz et al., 2020), corporate media monoculture (Lashua, 2005), ageism (Genoe & Whyte, 2015), post-coloniality (Farred, 2004), neoliberal discourse (Humberstone, 2022) and the punitive discourse (Yuen & Fortune, 2020). In rarer cases, scholars connected leisure activities to resistance at micro-level including negative labels such as unemployed (Beauchez, 2018), leisure constraints (Hen-

derson & Bialieschki, 1993), or land access rights for lay people (Taylor & Whalley, 2019).

5.2 Academic Research as Resistance

Twenty seven papers framed the academic research process as a form of resistance. Most often, this framing manifested through the entire research process. For example, Reid et al. (2022) argued that their CBPR project on the lived experience of dementia created space for participants to enact resistance. Yuen et al. (2021) suggested that a research project on wellness and life promotion resisted the linkage between colonization and suicide of indigenous youth. Sykes and Hamzeh (2018) similarly argued that decolonization happens amidst the research process. Others have framed specific elements of the research process as resistance including methodology, peer review, theory, or population selection. For instance, Nijjar (2023) and Berbary et al. (2023) used metaphor as a means to think through resistance to the colonial gaze and colonial restrictions on the behavior of academics respectively. Bandyopadhyay (2022) suggested that autoethnography could be a means to resist the intrusion of White logic into scholarship. Iwasaki et al. (2009) used a decolonizing methodology to ensure the cultural relevance of their study.

The specific targets of resistance in this thematic area included racial stereotypes in sports (St. Louis, 2004), gendered leisure constraints (Henderson & Gibson, 2013; Henderson & Hickerson, 2007), patriarchy (Nijjar & Johnson, 2022), White logic in leisure and tourism studies (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2022), settler colonialism (Grimwood, 2021), the boundaries between health and leisure (Betschild & Simmons, 1998), expectations for leisure studies faculty (Lopez et al., 2023), middle class values (AdorjánĽ & Lovejoy, 2003), and gaps in the leisure literature (Fox, 2007).

5.3 Uncommon Approaches to Resistance

Although most papers we reviewed presented leisure activities or research as a productive response to a social issue, twenty-seven papers framed leisure as a site of violence. Riordan (1982) noted that leisure was politically manipulated in an effort to subordinate all behavior which would not reinforce the strength of the Soviet State (see also Jallat, 2010 for similar examples from different locations and time periods). Petersen and Cenault (2022) observed that storytelling at two National Park Service sites reinforced White Supremacy, even as the NPS sought to operate under the aegis of inclusion. Mowatt (2023) noted that leisure settings have and continue to serve as settings for the killing of Black people by law enforcement. Wilkes (2020) highlighted the ways that leisure for some is sometimes purchased through violence to others. In particular, Sandals Resorts' Gourmet Discovery Dining program commodified food from non-western cultures in an effort to create a profitable tourist experience for (largely Western) travelers. Collectively, these studies suggest claims that leisure is solely an act or instrument of resistance should be viewed with skepticism.

Indeed, eight papers within this thematic area utilized an ongoing dialectic between oppression and resistance. Freysinger and Flannery (1992) observed that leisure was an arena in which gender norms were both reproduced and resisted. The-

riault (2019) similarly argued that forms of leisure at the margins may offer Black youth unique opportunities to understand and develop capacities to resist oppression. Butsch (2001) added a needed temporal dimension to the study of resistance. Indeed, he asserted that resistance efforts can be co-opted, de-fanged and sold back to the general public. The success or possibilities created by resistance movements thus cannot solely be judged by the immediate experience of participants, but also must be judged over the long term. In contrast, leisure activities were framed as targets for resistance in four papers.

6 A Critical Look at Resistance Studies

The ways in which resistance was atheoretical and ahistorical makes it difficult to see how individualized actions of any type, particularly, recreational activity could be an effective to counter discrimination. One way to assess whether individual or collective actions may effectively counter oppression is whether or not the targeted systems and institutions are even aware of the action even taking place. The U.S. Department of Defense takes resistance (and resistance movements) quite seriously and officially defines these activities as “an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability” (U.S. Department of Defense, 2010). We are heeding the U.S. D.O.D.’s definition of resistance not because it stands as the defining version of the term. Instead, this definition does reveal what the State deems as threatening. This definition also sheds some insight on what could result in the destabilization of the current order. After all isn’t that the point of resistance, to pose a threat and be taken seriously for the potential to steer change?

However, our point is not merely that resistance studies should become more theoretically grounded. Indeed, Rockhill (2020; 2023) situated Foucault as an agent of the state of France (supporting the Fouchet Plan – a precursor to the European Union that placed France, Britain, and the U.S at the head) and the broader intelligentsia (intellectuals who played a crucial part in serving as an alternative the growing labor and student struggles). While overtures were made in much of Foucault’s (1980) writings (in particular, “Truth and Power”), on the ground, Foucault countered the activities of the trade workers union (an alliance between French Section of the Workers’ International and the French Communist Party) in the late 1960s and early 1970s and actively worked against some 15,000 student activists (organized by the Union Nationale des Étudiants de France/the National Union of Students France) of May ‘68. In fact, many of the 1968 thinkers that we associate with forming post-structuralism worked in very counter-insurgent ways while maintaining a radical narrative in public and academic spaces (on Foucault, specifically in Rockhill, 2020; on Bourdieu, Deluze, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, and others in Rockhill, 2023). Rockhill (2023) argued that the timing of the myth-making out of the ‘68 thinkers was an intentional way to swift attention away from non-Western thinkers (Amilcar Cabral, Aoua Kéita, Beb Vuyk, Che Guevara, Una Marson, along with Fanon and others). This shift also realigned intellectual writing away from anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism with their intense focus in avoiding all discussion

of material conditions (and changing them). Therefore, we recommend that leisure scholars explore the work of non-Western thinkers who have highlighted the primacy of material conditions and the roles of social structures in creating and maintaining those conditions. This recommendation is not in the vein of changing syllabi, either as an act of decolonization (Zidani, 2021) or diversification of authorship (or the need for caution and intention in doing so: Anderson & Erlenbusch, 2017). Instead, this recommendation is in the vein of older, non-traditional academic, atypical leisure-based texts that inform a knowledge base of oppression. Again, not because we think that academia is the space of liberation, but it can inform people by serving as a good space for studying resistance, dismantling, decolonization, and abolition. The radical thoughts and writings of freedom fighters, resistance activists, political prisoners, and movement organizers should be a foundational piece of study in academic spaces.

Our analysis also revealed a general lack of study of collective action that has been organized to counter oppression. We are particularly hard pressed to situate examples of this being fodder for classroom or course topics. The political history of the 1960s and 1970s (as well as before and beyond) as many of the leisure-based journals came into existence are devoid of any discussion of political forms of leisure or recreation that took place.

The leisure and recreation knowledge-base of political action groups that overlap with the occupation and control of leisure spaces over the span of these specific journals such as (chronologically): the Black Arts Movement in 1965–1977, Union Nationale des Étudiants de France and Confédération Générale du Travail from 1966 to 1970, the Youth International Party (Yippies) in 1967 and 1968, the American Indian Movement (A.I.M.) from 1968 to 1978, Movimiento Estudiantil in Mexico City of 1968, the activities of Student Afro-Society and Students for a Democratic Society in New York in 1968, the Jane Collective from 1969 to 1973, The Young Lords in Chicago, New York, and the island of Puerto Rico from 1968 to 1976, Third World Liberation Front strikes from 1968 to 1998, South African Student Association from 1969–1977, Centros Sociales Okupados y Autogestionado in Spain and other squatting movements of the 1980s to the present, the June Democratic Struggle of Korea in 1987, AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-Up) from 1987 to 2012, Okupa Che at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City in 2000, the international Occupy Movement from 2011 to 2016, and Ujimaa Medics of Chicago that emerged in 2017, can offer some examples of the occupation of leisure settings, the engaging in activities of political recreation, and the use of recreational therapy for political means.

For example, both A.I.M. (along with other indigenous groups) and the Yippies occupied what are now deemed as historical tourist destination and leisure sites, respectively with the 1970 occupation of Alcatraz Island off the shore of San Francisco and the 1968 occupation (dubbed a “Yip-In”, like a sit-in) of Grand Central Station in New York City (Johnson, 1994; Peattie, 1970). It should be noted that the examples here may pull from some U.S.-based movements and actions, but the activities of several of these examples did extend beyond the contiguous U.S., as the American Indian Movement (A.I.M.) did extend itself beyond the US borders as it evolved politically before it dismantled itself (and more members were incarcerated) and were the much needed leaderships for the UN Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples; Third World Liberation Front was comprised of peoples in the US and beyond the US, as Third World was the de facto call from African, Asian, and South American liberation organizations wanting to take the third way (not the first - US and Europe and not the second - Soviet); and we direct attention on the Okupas/squatter rights movement, particularly in Chile.

Additionally, members of ACT-Up took part in the NAMES Project National Memorial Quilt, in which over 1,000 3' x 6' quilt panels were laid out prominently on the National Mall in Washington, D.C (Capozzola, 2002). While the Jane Collective and Ujima Medics have engaged in recreational therapy for political purposes as Jane used this form of therapy to counsel and treat women who received their free underground abortions post operation from 1965 to 1973 and the Ujima Medics teach young people how to treat gunshot wounds that may be inflicted upon them by street warfare or law enforcement in the present, both in Chicago, and ACT-Up routinely used this form of therapy to ease the suffering of those during the early days of the AIDS crisis (Christiansen & Hanson, 1996; O'Donnell, 2017; Ujima Medics, 2023). Additional, modern examples include: the role of sports and events as “washing” or “laundering” of national image in the case of the Saudi Government and its human rights violations (Chadwick & Widdop, 2022); Seattle’s Capitol Hill Occupied Protest (CHOP) of 2020 and the formation of guerilla gardens to build community and provide basic needs (Hou, 2023); the (illegal) occupation of spaces (okupas) by disposable populations for communal living, health care, and recreation in la ciudad de Concepción, Chile (Bloomfield, 2021); how residents initiated independent recreation spaces and park programs in San Francisco (eventually becoming a part of official park and planning department programming, Wilson et al., 2012); and, the necessary situating of tourism theoretically as the “ongoingness of imperialism” (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022). What is remarkable and invaluable about these examples is their impact on the material conditions of those oppressed and the clear State reaction of the resistance taken up by the collective action of those actors.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, we set out to describe and critique the resistance studies literature. Much of the resistance studies literature has framed leisure activities as an effective response to injustice. Injustice has been defined in a variety of ways including individual level concerns such as leisure constraints and broader resistance targets such as ideology or discourse. Given the atheoretical focus of much resistance studies work, our reliance on leisure constraints and broad social structures as the targets of individual leisure activities makes sense. That is, without a conceptual grounding, the training of the individual researcher and the dominant discourse of the field steps in to frame the study in question (Stewart et al., 2008). Our collective concern with leisure directed us toward activity as both means of resistance (Kivel, 2018). Likewise, our overreliance on Foucault directed attention toward discourse, rather than material change, as the target of resistance activities.

While resistance studies have scholars have adopted a variety of labels and targets for social change, many are united in their lack of attention to material realities of

the oppressed groups under study. We do not wish to downplay what the feeling of “resisting” may do for any individual of an oppressed group. Smucker (2017) for example noted that groups can provide a sense of safety and belonging not found elsewhere in member’s lives. However, when those individual or group feelings take precedence over the need for resistance to have an impact on the world outside of the group, the possibilities for structural change are limited (Smucker, 2017). In particular, the cause of the suffering remains after safe spaces have been created and individual harm has been repaired.

Further, while scholarship is an invaluable tool as it can produce a body of knowledge that could inform action, it in and of itself does not impact the material conditions of discrimination or oppression. And when there was a stated form of resistance that took form in the material world, such as a recreation group, summer camp or after-school program, we did not find how the operation of that activity threatened any perpetrating system or institution. Indeed, we wonder whether leisure activities could ever function as meaningful resistance. Given that this question is outside the purpose of the present manuscript, we leave this question to future researchers. This of course is not to say that there is nothing within the leisure studies field to resist. Leisure, play, recreation, sport, tourism, and outdoor recreation emerged from a political economy of slave power (leisure) colonialism (recreation), imperialism (tourism), eugenicism (play), capitalism (sport), and settlerism (outdoor recreation). So there is in fact much to resist, dismantle, and abolish in this field of ours and the lives/experiences of the wider public (Mobily, 2018; Mowatt, 2023). When we adopt theories and conceptual frameworks that center the material realities of those most vulnerable, we will begin to realize the promise of resistance studies.

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41978-024-00157-1>.

Funding Open access funding provided by the Carolinas Consortium.

Declarations

Conflicts of Interest We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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