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8-10 July 2025

Steven Cock, Alan Johnston, Hongrui Zhu, Susan Walsh, Ruby Mathew, Spencer Swain, Minoo Esfehani, Brendan Paddison and Jenny Hall

York St John University, York, United Kingdom

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Contents

Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

LEISURE
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION

Est.
1841

YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

LEISURE
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION

Est.
1841

YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

LEISURE
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION

Est.
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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

Keynote Lecture Sessions and Panels

Keynote 1: LSA 50th Anniversary Conference Panel – Justice in the Face of Polycrisis: The Future of Leisure?

Bailey Adie (Leisure Studies Association) - University of Oulu, Finland

Edwin Gómez (The Academy of Leisure Sciences) - East Carolina University, USA

Jenny Hall (Geographies of Leisure and Tourism Research Group) - York St John University, UK

Dan Henhawk (Canadian Association of Leisure Studies) - University of Manitoba, Canada

Kimberly J. Lopez (Canadian Association of Leisure Studies) - University of Waterloo, Canada

Hazel Maxwell (World Leisure Organization) - Western Sydney University, Australia

Trudie Walters (Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies) - Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki/ Lincoln University, New Zealand

Abstract

With the LSA celebrating 50 years in 2025, the importance of leisure within contemporary society has become ever more clear. However, access to and participation in leisure is unevenly distributed across global society, which is only exacerbated by the current global polycrisis across interconnected social, ecological, and spatial systems. Taking a justice-centered approach, and in acknowledgement of the systemic entangledness of justice and polycrisis, this session will focus on how we, as leisure scholars, can respond to this complexity conceptually, ethically and politically. To this end, this panel brings together leading international scholars representing a cross-section of international academic leisure organizations to discuss how we can build just approaches to leisure now and in the future in the face of ongoing systemic polycrisis.

Presenter Biographies

Bailey Ashton Adie is a researcher in the Geography Research Unit at the University of Oulu, Finland, where she is part of the Frontiers of Arctic and Global Resilience Research program as well as the EU Horizon Project "Cross-Border Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas". She is the Chair of the Leisure Studies Association and Director of Communications for the Recreation, Tourism and Sport Specialty Group (RTS), part of the American Association of Geographers. She is also the co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Heritage Tourism* and sits on the editorial boards of *Tourism Geographies*, *Tourism Planning & Development*, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, and *El Periplo Sustentable*. Her research interests include World Heritage, heritage tourism, community resilience, community-based tourism, natural hazards and tourism, tourism and development, second homes, and dark tourism. Her work has been published in book chapters as well as in leading journals, including *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Current Issues in Tourism*, and the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. She is the author of the book *World Heritage and Tourism: Marketing and Management* (2019) and co-editor of *Second Homes and Climate Change* (2023).

Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

LEISURE
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION

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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

Edwin Gómez is a Professor and former Chair (2017-2023) of the Department of Recreation Sciences and Sport Management at East Carolina University. He teaches in the Recreation, Park and Sport Management Program at ECU. Dr. Gómez was a Professor at Old Dominion University with University Professor Designation for excellence in teaching. He has authored over 50 peer-reviewed publications in research interests that include: attitudes and perceptions surrounding racial and ethnic perspectives on leisure in public recreation settings; parks and sense of community in neighborhoods; resident attitudes and perceptions towards tourism; urban proximate parks and use by nontraditional users; and dog parks as a specific type of park. Dr. Gómez is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) and is a current associate editor of the Journal of Leisure Research and past associate editor of Leisure Sciences and World Leisure Journal. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administrators (AAPRA). Dr. Gómez was a sergeant in the U.S. Army and after serving his country, he earned a BS from Salem State University in geography; an MS from Rochester Institute of Technology in hospitality and travel management; a PhD from Michigan State University in park, recreation, and tourism resources with an urban studies emphasis; and an MA in linguistics at Old Dominion University. In his spare time Dr. Gómez likes to read fantasy/science fiction novels, hike, and travel. He is fluent in English and Spanish, and conversational in Italian.

Jen Hall is Associate Professor in Justice, Tourism and Leisure at York Business School, York St John University. As a cultural geographer, her work explores issues of social and ecological justice in tourism, leisure, events, heritage and sport. Jen is an expert in governance and policy related to tourism, specifically urban heritage, spatial justice, and regenerative tourism in natural environments. She is currently working with North York Moors National Park on a five-year research project to investigate the climate crisis and conservation through public engagement programmes. Jen is part of a national collaboration to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the first woman to climb Everest and has published widely on gender in mountaineering adventure. Jen is Secretary of The Geographies of Leisure and Tourism Research Group, a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and a member of the Other Everests AHRC Research Network. She has extensive professional experience in managing cultural regeneration projects in the public sector, establishing and leading major venues, festivals, and cultural development programs. Additionally, she is a mountaineer and a member of her local mountain rescue team.

Dan Henhawk (he/him) is a Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) person from the Six Nations of the Grand River community in southern Ontario, Canada. He is currently an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management at the University of Manitoba. His research interests revolve around the tensions between Western conceptualizations, and practices, of leisure and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Specifically, he is interested the tensions between leisure and neo-colonialism, questions about leisure and struggles for decolonization and leisure in relation to climate change. He also has interests in auto-ethnography and narrative inquiry.

Kimberly Lopez works as an Associate Professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Faculty of Health, at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. As a community-engaged researcher, Kim is interested in critically examining structures that (re)produce oppressions affecting experiences of long-term care, helping work, migration, and labourer well-being. In relation to critical labour and leisure studies, her interest areas include gender, critical age, disability, and race studies.

Hazel Maxwell is an experienced, highly accomplished leisure educator and a leisure management professional/ practitioner with over 30 years' experience in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. She is currently an academic at Western Sydney University in the School of Health Sciences in Sydney, Australia. Her expertise gives her a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the leisure industry. She is very passionate about leisure, in particular its role in tackling health inequality and the exclusion of marginalised population groups from leisure activities and this is where her extensive post-doctoral research is focused. Hazel has been a director of the Australia and New Zealand Leisure Studies Association (ANZALS) from 2013 to 2018 to where she advocated and delivered leisure policy. She also has networks with international leisure and sport organisations including Leisure Studies Association (LSA), International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG), International Association of Physical Education for Girls and Women (IAPESGW), and as Associate Editor for the leading journal, Managing Sport and Leisure.

Dr Trudie Walters is a Senior Lecturer at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki/Lincoln University in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research platform centres on events and leisure as interdisciplinary lenses through which to understand the inner workings and values of society. Much of her work focuses on the experiences of historically under-served groups. Firmly positioned within a social science framework, her research clearly links into the applied reality of events and leisure as social phenomena, areas of academic research, global industries, and practices. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Australia and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies (as immediate past President and current Chair of the Events Working Group), and is on the Editorial Board of a number of top tier journals including *Leisure Studies*.

Keynote 2: Leisure, Power, and Inequality: Decolonising Sport, Leisure and Social Life

Dr Aarti Ratna (Northumbria University, UK)

Abstract

In this keynote talk, Dr Aarti Ratna will critically interrogate instrumentalised ideas of leisure as a depoliticised area of social life and instead expose the entangled web of power, privilege, and exclusion that permeate this area of social life. Aarti will explore how inequalities within leisure and sport are shaped by the intersecting forces of 'race,' migration, gender, class and caste to highlight how leisure spaces often reproduce and reinforce social hierarchies rather than serving as sites of inclusion and liberation. Her talk underscores the importance of foregrounding the lived experiences of racialised and marginalised communities to challenge colonial understandings of leisure and sport. In so doing, Aarti seeks to address key issues of social justice within leisure studies, calling for a more radical and critical approach to researching and teaching leisure, emphasising the role of feminist and anti-racist perspectives in deconstructing dominant narratives and advocated for scholarship that actively works towards equity and transformation. Through this keynote, Aarti aims to provide a thought-provoking critique of the leisure studies field, urging scholars to move beyond surface-level engagement with diversity and instead confront the more profound structural inequities that shape leisure experiences. Her talk reaffirms the need for politically engaged research that acknowledges and challenges intersecting forms of oppression in leisure and sport.

Presenter Biography

Dr Aarti Ratna is an Associate Professor of Social Sciences at Northumbria University. Her research focuses on issues of social justice within the realm of leisure, particularly emphasising how 'race,' gender, and class intersect in shaping experiences and identities. Dr Ratna's work critically examines the role of sport, particularly football, in community formation and belonging, exploring how racialised and gendered identities are constructed and negotiated within these spaces. She has also conducted research on walking as a cultural and political practice, considering how movement and mobility relate to identity, exclusion, and empowerment amongst the South Asian diaspora. Additionally, she engages with the broader socio-political landscape, analysing the rise of neo-populist ideologies in the Global North and their implications for marginalised communities. Through her scholarship, Dr Ratna seeks to challenge Eurocentric narratives and highlight the lived experiences of underrepresented groups. Her research contributes to critical debates on inequality, inclusion, and how leisure and sport function as sites of resistance and oppression. Dr Ratna's research has been widely published, and she remains committed to producing impactful scholarship that bridges academic inquiry with real-world social issues and policy formation.

Keynote 3: Panel – From Exclusion to Belonging: Reshaping Leisure and Tourism through Social Justice

Dr Karla Boluk (University of Waterloo, Canada)

Dr Minoo Esfehani (York St John University, UK)

Alex Sherman (Chief Executive: Bath Preservation Trust, UK)

Aicha Smith-Belghaba (Founder: Esha's Eats, Cultural Strategist, Indigenous Relations Specialist at KLB Consulting, Canada)

Panel Convenor: Afrah Shaik (PhD Student: University of Waterloo, Canada)

Abstract

This panel critically explores how inclusivity, accessibility, and social justice intersect within leisure and tourism studies. Panellists will engage with themes of community empowerment, regenerative tourism, and the importance of centring Indigenous knowledges and perspectives from the Global South. The discussion will examine how structural inequities shape access to leisure and tourism resources, highlighting historically marginalised voices. The panel also considers the transformative potential of equitable distribution and participatory governance in advancing social justice.

The discussion will be structured around four key thematic areas:

1. Justice in Practice: Centring Community Voices: Dr Boluk will reflect on her journey building and sustaining meaningful relationships with community partners, particularly her ongoing collaborations with Indigenous partners from Six Nations on Turtle Island. She will discuss how her commitment to feminist theory—especially an ethic of care—has been both broadened and deepened through these partnerships. Her methodological approach has evolved over time, transitioning from case studies to Creative Analytic Practice as a representational strategy, and more recently to community-based participatory action research, shaped by the strengthening of these relationships. Boluk will also explore how her knowledge translation efforts have transformed alongside this journey, including initiatives such as outdoor community plays and a documentary that embodies care theory and Indigenous worldviews within transformational and regenerative tourism experiences.

2. Equity of Access to Natural Resources for Local and Indigenous Communities: This presentation critically discusses the planning and policy barriers that prevent communities from benefiting from leisure-based natural resources and activities, with a particular emphasis on case studies from the Global South. Drawing on her long-term research on Equity of Access to leisure and tourism, Dr Esfehani will explore the integration of equitable access discussions into urban and rural tourism planning and policy, assessing their implications for social justice. She will adopt a socio-cultural perspective within the framework of sustainable tourism planning to discuss the opportunities in ensuring equitable access in tourism. Drawing from her research experience and professional advisory work, she will present both successful and unsuccessful initiatives involving local, marginalized, and Indigenous communities across diverse levels and sites, including South Africa, Mozambique, Iran, and New Zealand.

Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

LEISURE
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION

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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

3. Intellectual and Emotional Access to Built Heritage: Buildings can mean many different things to many different people based on appearance, location, purpose, previous occupancy and use, and their roots in history. Understanding of the built heritage of the UK and the multiple stories it can represent is strongly influenced by contemporary societal expectations and narratives, which in turn influences new perspectives and emotional responses. Similarly, the presentation of cultural heritage, the language and the process used to describe it, has a significant impact on how people engage with and respond to the subject. Using practise-based experience gained in Bath and beyond, Alex Sherman will explore approaches which provide and support inclusive and diverse intellectual and emotional access to built heritage and cultural spaces, along with the substantial and wide-reaching benefits for community, belonging and enhanced social value.

4. Food as Bridge: Connecting Communities through Shared Meals: This presentation critically explores the role of food as a conduit for Indigenous knowledge transmission, cultural memory, and community empowerment. Drawing on her lived experience as a chef, educator, and Indigenous woman, Aicha Smith-Belghaba examines how culinary work extends beyond cooking—serving as a practice of storytelling, reclaiming space, and building relationships rooted in care. Through her culinary enterprise *Esha's Eats*, Aicha uses ancestral foods as tools for both connection and resistance. She crafts meals that nourish the body and spirit while cultivating inclusive spaces where people can gather, learn, and belong. Her work centers Indigenous food sovereignty and highlights the role of cultural foodways in community healing. By grounding each dish in lived experience and traditional teachings, Aicha challenges colonial narratives and resists the tokenistic inclusion commonly seen in hospitality and tourism sectors. This work is not merely about representation—it is about reclamation. Aicha's contribution will explore the transformative potential of food-centered tourism that uplifts the voices and leadership of Indigenous women, expands access to land-based culinary knowledge, and fosters intergenerational learning through workshops, public events, and community gatherings. She proposes a model of culinary tourism that is emotionally resonant, culturally grounded, and radically inclusive—where care is not an abstract ideal but an embodied practice. Through this lens, Aicha invites a reimagining of hospitality that is rooted in relationships, reciprocity, and resurgence.

Presenter Biographies

Karla A. Boluk (she/her/hers) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Visiting Professor in the York Business School at York St John University, York, UK, appointed to the International Science Council's Global Roster of Experts, and the Co-chair of Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI). Guided by a social justice orientation, feminist theory, and community-based participatory action research, the broad goals of Dr Karla Boluk's research program is to examine ways tourism may enhance the well-being and quality of life for those involved in or affected by tourism, positioning tourism as a mechanism for the creation of positive change. Boluk has been building relationships with Six Nations of the Grand River partners over the last three years, which have grown through consistent, respectful engagement grounded in listening, learning, and collaboration. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3096-0710

Dr Minoo Esfehani is an academic at York St. John University, UK working in sustainable tourism planning. Minoo has worked as a university lecturer, researcher and industry consultant for over 14 years in different countries. She is an expert in her field with a range of research and field experience working with universities, industry, national governments, indigenous communities and international organisations. Minoo published articles and book chapters and presented at several conferences. Her areas of interest and expertise include sustainable tourism & SDG, heritage management, natural protected areas, and local/indigenous studies in Global South.

Alex Sherman (Chief Executive: Bath Preservation Trust, UK)

Aicha Smith-Belghaba (Founder: Esha's Eats, Cultural Strategist, Indigenous Relations Specialist at KLB Consulting, Canada)

Afrah Shaik is a recent graduate from the University of Waterloo's Recreation and Leisure Studies program and is continuing her education with a Master's thesis exploring regenerative tourism initiatives and Indigenous and BIPOC resurgence. Her academic and professional work is rooted in a commitment to equity, community-based research, and transformative approaches to tourism. Afrah completed a study abroad in Hong Kong to better understand tourism through non-Western perspectives and regularly travels to Hyderabad, India, where her family resides, to stay grounded in intergenerational knowledge and global connections. She is currently the Research Coordinator at KLB Consulting, a Canadian firm that supports Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in developing strategic and economic development plans, tourism readiness strategies, experiential tourism development. A passionate youth advocate, Afrah is a member of the Region of Waterloo's Youth Advisory Council and is attending a national Youth Economic Development Summit to deepen her understanding of Indigenous economic growth and how young leaders can play a role. Her work reflects a deep dedication to inclusive, justice-driven planning that uplifts youth and underrepresented communities.

Parallel Sessions: Presentations

Degrowing World Heritage: Confronting Tourism Systems and Community (Dis) Empowerment

Bailey Ashton Adie (University of Oulu, Finland)

Abstract

While initially conceived as a conservation mechanism and built from a variety of international heritage preservation projects, the UNESCO World Heritage system has become increasingly complex in its focus (Adie, 2025). This is notable in the development of specific policies for both sustainable tourism (2010) and sustainable development (2015), which seeks to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into the operationalization of the World Heritage system (UNESCO, 2016). Within this framework, tourism is explicitly framed as a driver of economic development, albeit with an emphasis on equitable distribution of benefits (UNESCO, 2015). However, in practice, the ideals of the World Heritage Convention are often at odds with this emphasis on sustainable development as pro-growth tourism development becomes prioritized over not only site management but also local community needs (Amore & Adie, 2021). This disconnect is clearly visible in the rise in confrontations around overtourism, site management, representation, conservation, and land rights.

In order to critically address these issues, degrowth will be used as a lens through which to engage with current insufficiencies within the World Heritage system, particularly at the local level. Degrowth emphasizes resource sufficiency and conservation measures over neoliberal profit-seeking (Hall, 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019), and its application to heritage tourism, through the development of regenerative heritage tourism, has been previously noted as a means to avoid the pitfalls with current processes of community inclusion (Adie, 2024). Thus, this presentation seeks to deconstruct the power dynamics of the global World Heritage system to propose a more equitable approach to World Heritage and tourism.

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Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

LEISURE
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION

Est.
1841

YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

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Presenter Biography

Bailey Ashton Adie is a researcher in the Geography Research Unit at the University of Oulu, Finland, where she is part of the FRONT Research program as well as CROCUS, an EU Horizon Project. She is the Chair of the Leisure Studies Association and the co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Heritage Tourism*. Her research interests include World Heritage, heritage tourism, community resilience, community-based tourism, natural hazards and tourism, tourism and development, second homes, and dark tourism.

Unpacking 26 Years of Sportswashing Research: A Bibliometric Perspective (1999–2025)

Salma Aitlhaj (Keele University, UK and Ibn Tofail University, Kingdom of Morocco)
Matthew Hutchinson (Keele University, UK)
Samihi Youssef (Ibn Tofail University, Kingdom of Morocco)

Abstract

Sportswashing is the strategic use of sports to enhance image, strengthen soft power, and distract from criticism. Often tied to investments in sports to reshape global perceptions, it is enacted through hosting mega-events, sponsorships, and controlling narratives (Chadwick, 2022; Ganji, 2023; Grix and Brannagan, 2024). By leveraging sports' entertainment value and emotional appeal, it integrates into leisure and cultural experiences, making critical scrutiny less prominent while reinforcing positive branding (Grix and Brannagan, 2024). However, the concept remains contested, with scholars debating its analytical clarity and selective application (Boykoff, 2022; Skey, 2023). Given these debates, this study aims to provide a bibliometric analysis mapping the intellectual landscape of sportswashing and examining its theoretical and empirical evolution. To answer these research questions: What are the dominant theoretical frameworks and conceptual debates shaping sportswashing research? Which authors, journals, and institutions have contributed most significantly to the field? The study was executed following the PRISMA protocol (Moher et al., 2009), collecting data exclusively from the Scopus database using the following research string: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("sport*washing" OR "sport* diplomacy" OR "sport* soft power" OR "sport* branding"). In all, 168 relevant journal articles were included, published between 1999 and 2025. The analysis was performed using VOSviewer software for network visualisation and SPSS for statistical analysis. Yoav Dubinsky and Stuart Murray have emerged as the most influential authors, contributing significantly to the discourse. "Sportswashing" has seen heightened discussion in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Findings underscore the preeminence of sports diplomacy, soft power, and nation branding, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of the concept across domains of politics, media, and international relations. The present study elucidates whether sportswashing is a new representation of these existing theories or an independent concept. It sheds light on critical gaps, providing a deepening understanding of sportswashing as a dynamic phenomenon.

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Presenter Biographies

Salma Aitlhaj is a PhD student in Economics. Her research sits at the intersection of sports, branding, and regional development, exploring the impact of sporting events on a region's image and development. She is also interested in investigating the concepts of sportswashing and territorial attractiveness. Salma is a PhD Associate Student (Fellow) –Scholarship – accorded by the Moroccan National Center for Scientific and Technical Research, affiliated with the Faculty of Economy and Management at Ibn Tofail University in the Kingdom of Morocco and the Keele Business School at Keele University in the United Kingdom.

Dr Matthew Hutchinson is a lecturer at Keele University, sitting in Keele Business School. Matthew's current research focus is on sport and the environment, with a focus on the sustainability of sports organisations and events. He is also an associate member of the Sport Ecology Group.

Dr Youssef Samihi is a professor of Management at the National School of Business and Management at Ibn Tofail University in the Kingdom of Morocco, with a background in finance. His academic expertise spans various aspects of management, finance, and cultural dynamics in organizations.

Exclusive Feminized Fitness Spaces as a Case Study for Women's Leisure

Della Blossom Alderson (Cornell University, USA)

Abstract

The privatization of women's leisure spaces, realized through boutique fitness studios and women's-only gyms, has led to a reduction in the quality of public leisure opportunities and the resources these services receive. Women's leisure has been largely taken out of the public realm and made private by neoliberal policies that cut funding. Consequently, women's leisure options are increasingly based on profitability, rather than user preferences, resulting in mainly group fitness classes for women (Glover, 1999). These classes perpetuate societal ideals of skinny, white, rich women being "healthier" in a world where health is coded as worth. Despite, or perhaps due to the group culture, participants may feel a greater sense of self-worth and connection (Henderson et al., 1996; Andress et al., 2016), however, these benefits are restricted to those who can afford private classes. As wealthy participants are seemingly satisfied with their leisure opportunities, marginalized women must make do with minimal options provided in the public realm.

The current scant offerings for women's fitness are not a reflection of common desires, but the under-prioritization and privatization of women's leisure. These provisions reflect a narrow view of what women's leisure should and can look like and reify the feminine, white, wealthy, skinny hegemony. The current leisure landscape can harm those who try to fit in, and makes leisure more inaccessible to all those who do not. We must acknowledge the benefits of these spaces, including a sense of community and self-worth, while recognizing those who are not served by current offerings. Leisure must be prioritized in the public sphere and not simply left to the market, so women can access leisure opportunities that support their intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 2019). Prioritizing women's leisure is not only addressing inequities, but taking a step towards creating spaces which support communities' well-being.

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Presenter Biography

Della Blossom Alderson is a graduate student at Cornell University, studying urban and regional planning. In 2024, she completed her undergraduate degree at Acadia University (Wolfville, NS, Canada) in Community Development with a specialization in leisure education. Her passion for leisure began when she learned of the age- and gender-based inequities in her sport of women's field lacrosse. Since her introduction to the field, she has continued to explore questions of how women's intersectional identities impact their experience of physical recreation spaces, and how these spaces can better support their access and experience.

In Cuius Nomine? A Critical Reflection on Tourism and Leisure Policies and Non-Policies Amidst Polycrisis

Alberto Amore (University of Oulu, Finland)
Brendan Paddison (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

Recent geopolitical events, such as conflicts, economic instability, and shifting power dynamics, combined with the increasing ecological vulnerabilities driven by climate change. have exposed leisure and tourism to an unprecedented polycrisis scenario (Amore, 2024; Bianchi & Milano, 2024; Gössling & Scott, 2025). These interconnected crises have exacerbated systemic fragilities and are challenging the sector's resilience and adaptive capabilities. While the uncertainties and tensions directly attributed to leisure and tourism as a socio-economic activity have been extensively discussed from the perspective of sustainability and community development (Aquino et al., 2019: Boluk & Aquino, 2022), the indirect ramifications of the polycrisis and policy responsiveness appear to exacerbate the divide between visitor needs and community perspectives. Evidence suggests that policy responses at various governance levels often exacerbate rather than address the growing divide between visitor expectations, industry priorities, and community perspectives. This is particularly evident in the boosterist approach featured in national tourism strategies following the COVID-19 pandemic (Amore & Hall, 2024) and in the pro-growth tourism policies at a regional and local level (Paddison & Hall, 2024). Questions arise as for whom elected politicians and public officers design and implement policy actions relevant to leisure and tourism. To this end, the following presentation introduces a conceptual framework for the re-politicization of leisure and tourism discourses back in the public sphere. It does so by reflecting on emerging notions like justice, inclusivity and empowerment in tourism (Jamal & Higham, 2022) and how these can be transitioned in the currently de-politicized realm of destination governance in cities (Kellokumpu, 2023) and rural areas (Mostafanezhad, 2013). Through a combination of structuration theory and neo-Gramscian political economy, this presentation provides examples from both urban and rural destinations to illustrate the governance dynamics and ways to re-focus political discourse to proper and *just* policies that seek to serve all relevant stakeholders.

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Presenter Biographies

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As an urban geographer, **Brendan Paddison's** research interests include tourism and destination management, spatial justice, policy, and collaborative forms of destination governance and development. Brendan leads the Visitor Economy and Experience research group at York St John, is co-chair of the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) and is Chair of the York Tourism Advisory Board. He is the Editor of the Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education and a member of the editorial boards for the Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism and the e-Review of Tourism Research journal.

Rewilding and Tourism: Critiquing the Appeal, Opportunities and Constraints of Nature-Based Leisure and Tourism in Rewilding Initiatives with Specific Reference to Wild Ennerdale in the English Lake District

Claire Backhouse (Solent University, UK)

Abstract

Rewilding has emerged as the new paradigm in conservation, policy and management of peripheral agri-landscapes (Pettorelli et al., 2019). This shift towards more naturally-regulated, autonomous and ecologically functioning ecosystems has the potential to provide a vast suite of improved ecosystem goods and services including leisure and nature-based tourism (Rewilding Britain, 2021; Cerqueira et al., 2015). Advocates such as Rewilding Europe (RE) claim that rewilding offers huge tourism potential and suggest that it can invigorate marginalised rural communities, providing employment in new nature-based economies (Rewilding Europe, 2024; Lorimer et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is argued that tourism itself can provide the economic justification and finance for rewilding initiatives (Pellis, 2019), however, this assertion is largely untested and there is a paucity of research on the economic benefits of rewilding initiatives (Faure et al., 2024). Moreover, paradoxically, such restorative land management practices can conversely be used to legitimise the exclusion of people and their leisure and cultural practices (Jørgensen, 2015).

This study critically examines how the appeal of a destination is influenced by the process of rewilding and identifies the opportunities and constraints of the development of tourism, with specific reference to Wild Ennerdale, a well-established passive landscape scale rewilding initiative in the English Lake District. A mixed method approach was adopted, with 13 semi-structured interviews capturing the views of local tourism entrepreneurs, in addition to 105 visitor surveys. Nine dimensions of leisure in rewilding initiatives were identified and highlighted the contestations and tensions between stakeholders in nature-based tourism in areas undergoing ecological change. A conceptual model of the relationship between the dimensions of recreation and rewilding is also presented. These findings highlight the opportunities and constraints of rewilding tourism and shed light in this field for financiers of conservation, policy makers, land managers, local communities and entrepreneurs.

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Presenter Biography

Claire Backhouse is a Lecturer in Sport and Adventure Management at Solent University and former Outdoor Learning Tutor and Product Manager in the adventure tourism industry. Her research interests lie in environmentally-sustainable adventure tourism and climate change adaptation in adventure sport. ORCID Id: 0000-0002-9011-2983

Recreation, Tourism and Climate Response in the Landscape of Grand Pré UNESCO World Heritage Site in Nova Scotia, Canada

Glyn Bissix (Acadia University, Canada)

Claude DeGrâce (Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated, Canada)

Josie Rafuse (Acadia University, Canada)

Emily Jollymore (Acadia University, Canada)

Nicholas Graham (Acadia University, Canada)

Abstract

This study reports on a visitor interpretation initiative of the Landscape of Grand Pré Inc (LGPI) to balance the promotion of recreation and tourism within the Landscape, the preservation of its cultural and historical assets, the enhancement of its rural and agricultural livelihoods, and the protection of this unique landscape under threat from climate change, sea level rise and increasingly severe weather patterns. Specifically, the LGPI's goal is to improve the visitor experience within the Landscape and the Harvest Moon Trailway (Bissix 2012) that transects the Landscape (LGPI 2022; MacKinnon et al. 2009). The Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated (LGPI 2025) is working with Acadia University to develop an interactive smart phone application (app) (Locatify 2025; Rafuse et al 2024) that connects visitors with amenities and services while simultaneously interpreting the area's storied history, its climate change challenges, and the need to preserve the area's rural and agricultural way of life. The development of this app provides the opportunity to create a regional recreation asset and tourism product that not only attracts and engages new and old visitors, it offers a valuable community development initiative that connects visitors with the local community, enhances visitor understanding and engagement of the Landscape's past, present and future challenges, promotes community development that supports strategic partnerships with visitors, amenities, and businesses within and adjacent to the Landscape while supporting sustainable and responsible recreation and tourism (Bissix et al 2010; Vince 2019).

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Glyn Bissix is Professor of Community Development, and of Environment and Sustainability Studies. His present research focuses on community focused strategic planning, and in supporting small agricultural enterprises to apply low carbon, circular economy strategies.

Claude DeGrâce is presently the Executive Director of Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated responsible for managing the UNESCO World Heritage Site. He has previously served in numerous positions with Parks Canada including Superintendent of the Grand-Pré National Historic Site and Manager of National Historic Sites in New Brunswick, Canada.

Josie Rafuse has worked in several internships in the agricultural sector in South-Western Nova Scotia including a six-month internship focused on interpreting net zero carbon and circular economy initiatives of the Grand Pré Winery.

Emily Jollymore is an undergraduate thesis student in the Environment and Sustainability Program at Acadia University. Her thesis focuses on calculating the carbon expenditures of the Grand Pré Winery's supply chain with a goal of its operations approaching net zero carbon by 2030.

Nicholas Graham has a BA Environmental & Sustainability Studies and Political Science from Acadia University and a Diploma in Natural Resources Environmental Technology from the Nova Scotia Community College. He soon starts a Master's in Politics focusing on systemic racism in Nova Scotia's environmental policy.

Failure of the Olympic Referendum 2015 in Hamburg– Discourses and Insights from Different Stakeholders

Katharina Bürger (University of Brighton, UK)

Abstract

Since the mid-2010s, the Olympic Games have increasingly been criticised regarding their negative impacts and long-lasting, often detrimental, legacies (Boykoff, 2017). Benefitting mostly the IOC and leaving residents with the negative aftermath of the mega-event, the IOC has trouble attracting sufficient interest from cities that want to host the Games. Support from residents and other stakeholders is among the key factors for the IOC when it comes to deciding on the next host city – if there even is a pool of applicants to choose from left. For example, the 2024 and 2028 Games only had two applicants (Paris and Los Angeles) left as contenders, marking the start of a new era for the Olympic Movement (Schut et al., 2020). One of the cities that aspired to apply for the Olympic Games 2024/2028 was Hamburg, Germany. After holding a referendum on 29th November 2015, the city of Hamburg did not pursue its application since it was unable to secure support from the public (Wicker and Coates, 2018; Kuhlmann, 2020).

Building on my presentation at the LSA 2024 Annual Conference at the University of the West of Scotland in Paisley, this paper will showcase the predominant discourses present in the media and other materials published by various stakeholders such as activist groups, opponents and residents' associations based in Hamburg. Following a qualitative approach, multimodal discourse analysis is applied to uncover the reasons why the referendum in Hamburg failed and stakeholders rejected the idea of Olympic Games in their own city. Beyond economic and financial concerns, opposition to the Games was inter alia rooted in debates about city development, urban space, access to leisure, and the right to the city. Critics feared that hosting the Olympics would prioritise commercialised sports infrastructure over accessible, everyday leisure spaces for residents and mass sports (Breitensport). The prospect of displacement, rising living costs, and restricted public access to recreational areas fuelled resistance from activist groups, opponents, and residents' associations. With renewed discussions regarding a German application for the 2040 Olympics, marking the 50th anniversary of the German reunification, the topic of Olympics, protest, opposition and resistance is more pressing than ever and of current importance.

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Presenter Biography

Katharina Bürger is a PhD candidate at the School of Business and Law at the University of Brighton, United Kingdom. Her research interests include mega-events and in particular Olympic Games and how such are increasingly met with opposition and resistance by a diverse range of stakeholders.

Knit One Purl One: Fibre Arts as Methodology, Weaving Connections and Building Communities

Anna Carr (University of Otago, New Zealand)

Abstract

Fibre arts (i.e., knitting, spinning, crocheting, weaving, macrame, and so on) have long been seen as solitary, traditional crafts. However, these practices have experienced a resurgence, evolving into dynamic leisure activities that foster social connections and community building. Crafts and fibre arts are increasingly a serious focus of academic research and a method (Castelblanco Pérez 2022, Court 2020, Harrison and Ogden 2021, Kimmerer 2013, Shercliff and Holroyd 2020, Smith 2023).

Drawing on qualitative research, reflecting on the author's experiences as a "serial beginner knitter, spinner, and weaver", this session explores how engaging in fibre arts can be serious leisure (Stebbins 2009) and socially significant by cultivating relationships through in-person crafting groups and online communities. These spaces nurture belonging and knowledge exchange, enabling the revival of crafting 'circles'. Online forums and the rise of virtual platforms (e.g., Instagram) connect crafters worldwide. Informal gatherings in-person at fibre art stores, workshops, and galleries offer opportunities to share work, exchange techniques, and inspire one another.

Key outcomes of this research highlight the revival of communal crafting practices, especially during and following the Covid-19 pandemic, where fibre arts served as a creative outlet, a tool for virtual and in-person leisure interaction. Initiatives such as Dunedin's "Purling across the Plain" event exemplify how fibre arts initiatives enable community engagement and social interactions. To conclude, fibre arts can transcend utilitarian origins, becoming powerful vehicles for self-expression and community solidarity - connecting individuals. This work advances the understanding of fibre arts as a research *methodology*, encouraging scholars to embrace crafting as a participatory and relational method of knowledge-making (Harrison & Ogden 2021; Shercliff & Holroyd 2020). (Participants are invited to engage in crafting during the session, embodying the practice as a mode of reflection and academic community building).

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Presenter Biography

Associate Professor Anna Carr is Head of Department of Tourism University of Otago and co-Director and founder of the Centre for Recreation Research (University of Otago). She serves on the editorial boards of Frontiers, Journal of Ecotourism and the Journal of Heritage Tourism. Her research interests include Indigenous handicrafts, adventure tourism, Indigenous community development, Indigenous tourism, cultural landscapes and protected area management. She hails from Aotearoa New Zealand where the sheep population has declined from a peak of 70 million in 1982 to c24.4 million in 2023 – her recent mantra is "Use wool, refuse recycled plastic microfibres".

"Territories of Inclusion: Public Leisure and Urban Thought in Latin America"

Danilo Ciaco Nunes (Universidade Estadual de Campinas [Unicamp], Brazil)
Bruno Modesto Silvestre (Universidade de Pernambuco [UPE], Brazil)
Silvia Cristina Franco Amaral (Universidade Estadual de Campinas [Unicamp], Brazil)

Abstracts

Territórios de Inclusão: Lazer Público e Pensamento Urbano na América Latina

O Sul Global enfrenta desafios históricos relacionados à desigualdade social (Caixeta & Menezes, 2021), à exclusão urbana (Romero & Bourzac, 2018) e à degradação ambiental (Teixeira, 2021). Nesse contexto, os espaços públicos de lazer emergem como elementos fundamentais para repensar o desenvolvimento do pensamento urbano-regional no Sul Global se tratados como territórios de coesão comunitária e inclusão dos indivíduos na sociedade (Kaźmierczak, 2007). Este trabalho tem como objetivo discutir o papel desses espaços no pensamento urbano latino-americano, destacando sua potencialidade para combater desigualdades, promover inclusão social, fortalecer identidades coletivas e fomentar práticas sustentáveis. A partir de uma abordagem interdisciplinar, o estudo busca contribuir para o debate sobre políticas públicas de lazer e planejamento urbano na região, sobretudo no Brasil. Este artigo utiliza uma abordagem qualitativa, baseada em revisão bibliográfica e análise de estudos de caso emblemáticos no Brasil e na América Latina. A análise focou em três dimensões: inclusão social, sustentabilidade ambiental e fortalecimento da identidade cultural. O trabalho sugere que os espaços públicos de lazer são mais do que áreas de recreação; são ferramentas poderosas para transformação social e ambiental. Repensar o pensamento urbano-regional latino-americano implica reconhecer o potencial desses espaços para construir cidades menos desiguais e culturalmente vibrantes. Futuras pesquisas devem explorar como integrar essas práticas em escalas regionais e nacionais, garantindo sua sustentabilidade a longo prazo.

Territories of Inclusion: Public Leisure and Urban Thought in Latin America

The Global South faces historical challenges related to social inequality (Caixeta & Menezes, 2021), urban exclusion (Romero & Bourzac, 2018) and environmental degradation (Teixeira, 2021). In this context, public leisure spaces emerge as fundamental elements for rethinking the development of urban-regional thinking in the Global South if treated as territories of community cohesion and inclusion of individuals in society (Kaźmierczak, 2007). This work aims to discuss the role of these spaces in Latin American urban thought, highlighting their potential to combat inequalities, promote social inclusion, strengthen collective identities and encourage sustainable practices. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the study seeks to contribute to the debate on public leisure policies and urban planning in the region, especially in Brazil. This article uses a qualitative approach, based on a literature review and analysis of emblematic case studies in Brazil and Latin America. The analysis focused on three dimensions: social inclusion, environmental sustainability and strengthening cultural identity. The work suggests that public leisure spaces are more than recreation areas; They are powerful tools for social and environmental transformation. Rethinking Latin American urban-regional thinking implies recognizing the potential of these spaces to build less unequal and culturally vibrant cities. Future research should explore how to integrate these practices at regional and national scales, ensuring their long-term sustainability.

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Presenter Biographies

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Positives, Perils, Procedures? Issues to Consider in the Use of Digitised Archive Research in Sport and Leisure Disciplines: A Case Study on the Laws of Amateur Swimming, 1869

Steven Cock (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

Archival research is a method of data collection that has 'received minimal attention from leisure scholars to date' but has potential as a form of research in sport and leisure disciplines (Tully and Carr, 2021, p.888). There have been notable advancements in the availability of archival material that was, at one time, restricted to those physical archive locations in which hard-copy original documents were held. Today, there is scope for researchers in sport and leisure disciplines to take advantage of opportunities that arise from the increasing digitisation of archive source material. This raises important methodological questions however on the processes that are involved in such research. Curry and Dunning (2017) have argued that researchers must exercise caution in not simply using keyword search terms in online search engines and assuming that all subsequent results are appropriate. Individual data sources might have importance and relevance, but should not be viewed in isolation. At best, individual data extracts serve 'as "stills" in a movie, as fragments of a process' (Elias, 1998, p.192). This paper draws upon previous research that examined the long-term sportisation of swimming (Cock, 2012, 2018). The first standardised Laws of Amateur Swimming were established on the 7 January 1869 by the fledgling organisation that would go on to become known as the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), now Swim England, the national governing body of competitive swimming in England. This particular document was rediscovered through examination of digital newspaper archives, rather than the archives of the ASA (Cock, 2012). The formation of a first set of standardised laws is often considered a notable milestone in the history of modern sports, but what exactly does such an item illustrate in itself? What are the potential benefits of utilising such search databases and the potential challenges, pitfalls and methodological issues of rigour to consider when undertaking such research?

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Presenter Biography

Dr Steven Cock is Senior Lecturer in Business and Management in York Business School at York St John University (YSJU). His research interests include long-term processes of social and cultural change within the sport and leisure industries, based on an underpinning figurational sociological approach. Steven is also Co-Chair of the People in Employment Settings (PiES) Research Group at YSJU and has also undertaken research in areas linked to the context of higher education, learning and teaching pedagogies and sociological research linked to intersections of gender and social class.

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Play-Based Trading in Tabletop Gaming Communities: Leisure, Knowledge, Value and Trust

Matt Coward-Gibbs (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

Since the dawn of the 21st Century, Tabletop games have seen a rapid and continued rise in popularity, with distinct economies and infrastructure being constructed around them, including cafes (Kviat, 2024), digital and physical retail, and large-scale events. This paper focuses on the play associated with the trade of second-hand tabletop games and gaming ephemera. Forms of second-hand consumption within the tabletop gaming community vary from more traditional models of second-hand e-commerce and the utilisation of social media, to in-person trading at tabletop events, and algorithmic-based trading (known within the community as maths trading). Though second-hand consumption itself is well-trodden ground of academic exploration (Crewe and Gregson, 1998; Chad and Isbanner, 2024; Auxtova, Schreven and Wishart, 2025), considering it in the context of tabletop gaming provides a distinct opportunity to evaluate individuals' relationships with their leisure-specific knowledge, and how such knowledge interfaces with perceptions of value and trust between buyers and sellers.

In this paper, I present a working typology of second-hand exchange within UK tabletop gaming, focusing on how interlocking themes of knowledge, value and trust support and develop leisure activities. In particular, I draw on how the development of leisure or hobby (Muka, 2022) knowledges supports the understanding of value within tabletop gaming communities, and, at times, the obfuscated protocols associated with the trading of tabletop games.

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Presenter Biography

Matt Coward-Gibbs is a Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences at York St John University and the Technical Director of investigate.games (www.investigate.games). Matt's research explores how play shapes and mediates interactions between individuals, groups and the social world. He is one-third of the team that coordinates the *York Board Games Convention* (www.ybgc.co.uk) and the social deduction games convention *Demons Wake* (www.demonswake.co.uk). Matt's work can be read in journals including: *Information, Communication & Society*, *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, *Leisure Sciences*, *Games & Culture*, *Mortality* and *Sociological Research Online*. His latest project considers equity and accessibility at tabletop gaming events.

Basil of Caesarea

Jeff Crittenden (Huron University, Canada)

Abstract

The 4th century CE Roman Empire was creaking and groaning as political stability, power and economic growth were unravelling. Buildings and roads were in dire need of repair; civic affairs were crumbling; wars within and outside Roman borders were erupting; poverty was growing; diseases were spreading; unease settling in as those with power wanted to make Rome 'great again'. Then, in 313 CE, Emperor Constantine brings stability and hope, but it is not enough to deal with the social upheaval and realities of war, immigration, taxation, hunger, homelessness, disease, poverty and so forth. Into this time, Basil of Caesarea (330- 378 CE), in his leisure, reveals an approach to social justice. First Basil studies at the greatest institutions of his time but finds no solution. Then, Basil leaves for the desert to study and live an ascetic life but finds no solution. Finally, in a moment of dazzling insight, Basil realizes that to deal with injustice, suffering, and pain in the world, a community in its midst must be formed for justice, compassion and healing. Basil invited men and women, slave and free, to voluntarily, in their leisure, offer help and hope to their neighbours and in their neighbourhood. Basil perceptively notes-

> The bread you store belongs to the hungry. The clothes you accumulate belong to the naked. The shoes that you have in your closet are for the barefoot. The money you bury deep into the ground to keep it safe, belongs to the poor. You were unfair to as many people as you could have helped and you did not (Basil, On Social Justice).

Using Robert Stebbins's framework of serious leisure and Chris Rojek's insight on labour and leisure, it will be demonstrated that Basil of Caesarea offers a fresh approach to leisure and social justice in our present and emerging context.

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Presenter Biography

Jeffrey Crittenden, D. Min, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Theology, Huron University (London, Ontario, Canada), Founding Director of the Centre for Practical Theology (Canada) and an avid pilgrimage leader and participant.

From Measurement to Mobilization: The Role of Sustainable Tourism Indicators in Tourism Policy-Making – Lessons from York

Charlie Croft (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

The role of sustainable tourism indicators (STIs) as a management tool and monitoring system, supporting destinations' transition to a sustainable approach, is widely highlighted in the literature (Marinello et al., 2023). Less well studied is how particular STIs come to be selected (Islam et al., 2023) or how, subsequently, the knowledge they produce is absorbed, understood and acted on by different stakeholders (Pee and Kankanhalli, 2016). This case study of York, a city with a history of tourism planning dating back to the 1970s (Tempest, 2015), coincides with the implementation of a new tourism strategy committing the city to 'benchmarking, improving, and recognising sustainability performance' (City of York Council, 2024). Linking questions of what sustainability in tourism means to stakeholders, how they envisage it being measured, and what role they would ascribe to STIs in strategy governance, the study seeks novel insights into the potential roles that STIs can play in tourism policy-making.

Interpretive interviews with representatives of York's local authority, DMO, tourism and hospitality businesses, transport operators, business and civic organisations revealed that, whilst respondents showed a strongly positive orientation towards the project of sustainable tourism development, they showed little ability to define sustainability or interest in measuring it quantitatively.

Understanding that leadership of the project will necessarily be distributed, rather than resting with any single actor, respondents saw the potential role of STIs primarily in terms of their power as stories to connect people to it.

The study is at the stage of exploring the idea of "nobody in charge" leadership (Buchanan et al., 2007) to theorise STIs as instruments that mobilize the various stakeholder groups and promote team-building (Gasparini and Mariotti, 2023). There is potential to elucidate how the implementation of STIs can generate the necessary affective energy and political engagement to drive York's new vision.

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Presenter Biography

Charlie Croft is a lecturer in management at York St John University. He previously worked in local government leading in various areas including tourism policy. His research interests are in the areas of tourism strategy, the effects of power and how stakeholders may effectively be engaged in sustainable tourism strategy-making. He has also researched in stories of place, and sense of place and how these impact on people's embodied engagement with places and spaces.

d/Deaf and Hearing Impaired Visitor Experiences of Arts and Heritage: An AR Mediated Approach

Vanessa Cumper (University of Surrey, UK)

Caroline Scarles (Brunel University London, UK)

Albert Kimbu (University of Surrey, UK)

Daisy Liu (University of Surrey, UK)

Abstract

This paper provides the phenomenological perspective of the accessibility needs for people who are D/deaf, when visiting arts and heritage venues. We propose that despite the barrier created by complex language, individuals' preference for autonomous negotiations, within arts and heritage spaces could be empowering. Previous research evidenced that there was a diversity of communication interpretation, wayfinding, narrative decoding and encoding that was emancipatory. An enriched experience can be reconceptualised through multi-sensualised encounters within the exhibition paradigm. The paper concludes with a proposed framework that reconsiders the epistemological approach of accessibility at arts and heritage venues.

Presenter Biographies

Vanessa Cumper is a final year PhD candidate at the Surrey Business School, University of Surrey. Her research directly addresses challenges of inclusion and accessibility and the opportunities afforded by technology to support meaningful engagement with arts and heritage. She has worked with Open Innovation (UK Government) and the Digital Good Network.

Caroline Scarles is Professor of Technology in Society at the Brunel University London. Her work focuses on technology for social good, connection to nature through green and blue space, mental health, wellbeing and accessibility. She holds a number of positions, including: non-executive Director for Visit Surrey, Strategic Advisor to Surrey Cultural Partnership and Surrey Hills Arts. Caroline is a volunteer host for Mental Health Swims and a practising artist.

Albert Kimbu is Professor of Sustainability in Business. His research focuses on advancing and unpacking the linkages between tourism entrepreneurship, gender and inclusive development in established, emerging, and resource-scarce communities/destinations. Albert is interested in understanding how globally recognized development and entrepreneurship models can be glocalized and underpinned by inclusive practices that foster community development and sustainable business practices in tourism and related sectors.

Daisy Liu is Senior Lecturer in Hospitality. Her research interests include digital marketing, social media, digital technology, cross-cultural studies, and consumer psychology in tourism and hospitality.

Resistance at the Rodeo? Interspecies Power Relations within the Mexican Sport of Charrería

Kate Dashper (Leeds Beckett University, UK)

Carlos Monterrubio (Autonomous University of the State of Mexico, Mexico)

Helen Wadham (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)

Abstract

Charrería is the national sport of Mexico and a popular leisure practice, in terms of both participation and spectating. Drawing on J.C. Scott's (1985) "weapons of the weak," we examine the interactions and relations of power that unfold between humans, horses and bulls within this equestrian sport. Distinctions are made between the animal participants (horses and bulls) according to their different roles and perceived value, both intrinsic and performative. While the ridden "*caballos*" are valued based on their aesthetic qualities and athletic abilities, the unridden "*brutas*" and bulls generally occupy a marginal position due to their combination of devalued and undesirable attributes. Yet drawing on Scott's work enables us to uncover a more complex picture, in which all the animals attempt to exert some agency within the tightly constrained and choreographed setting of the charreada. By focusing particularly on their subtle but often effective forms of resistance - as when a group of *brutas* stick together in the ring, or a weary bull resolutely withstands all attempts to get him back on his feet - we see how even the lowest ranking individuals are able to retain some autonomy. By contrast, the ridden horses often have less capacity to resist human demands, despite - or rather because of - their higher value and status within the sport. By illuminating the resistance inherent in seemingly passive acts within this colourful yet regimented sociocultural context, our study therefore enables us to contribute to wider discussions about the intersectionality of animal/human agency and power relations in sport and leisure. Within the walls of the dusty *lienzo*, the horses and bulls find ways of navigating their circumstances, in turn forcing the human participants to respond in order to preserve the integrity of the social drama in which they are all participants.

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Presenter Biographies

Kate Dashper is Professor and Director of Postgraduate Research Degrees at the Carnegie School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University. She has published widely on different leisure-related topics, focusing particularly on gender and human-animal relations. She is currently one of the Managing Editors of *Leisure Studies* and a member of the Editorial Board for *World Leisure Journal.*

Dr Carlos Monterrubio, Autonomous University of the State of Mexico, Mexico.

Dr Helen Wadham, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.

The State of Play for Rural Visitor Travel in the UK: Sustainable Transitions or Same Old, Same Old?

Nick Davies (Glasgow Caledonian University, UK)
Angela Smith (University of Leeds, UK)

Abstract

Leisure is often undertaken in rural, sensitive locations including national parks and protected areas with a remit for conservation. Trips to the countryside account for 19% of domestic day visits, with many by car (>400 million trips in 2023 in England), causing congestion, visual pollution, CO_2 emissions and social problems including disruption to residents (Smith, 2023; Visit Britain, 2024). The reasons include seeking remote destinations as an escape from urban life, a lack of attractive sustainable alternatives such as public transport, complex trip patterns and proliferation of group activities (Holden and Linerud, 2011; Le Klahn and Hall, 2015, Smith, 2023). There is also unequitable accessibility of cultural and natural sites for rural leisure (Tomej and Liburd, 2020).

Given the importance of the wellbeing economy and green/blue spaces for engaging in nature-based activities (Wellbeing Economy Alliance, 2023), a dissonance occurs when considering leisure travel to/from and within these areas. SDGs 3, 10 and 13 amongst others address decarbonisation, and just transitions to equitable, healthy climate-resilient societies.

This review of a variety of data sources including longitudinal data from the National Travel Survey, considers visitor patterns in order to understand changes (or lack of) from the recent past and takes a futures approach to analysing and predicting the future for UK rural leisure travel under a backdrop of social, technological and environmental change.

Rural visitor travel planning has received sparse attention going as far back as the 1980s (Lumsdon et al., 2006; Guiver and Stanford, 2014). Rural attractions and destinations favour car-use except isolated examples promoting innovative sustainable travel. Our review recommends that policies need to consider long-term changes in car ownership, demographics, changing free time and flexible working patterns, more staycations, AirBNB, and electric vehicles when addressing key priorities of decarbonisation, equitable and climate resilient futures in rural leisure spaces.

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LEISURE STUDIES ASSOCIATION Est. 1841 | YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY

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Presenter Biographies

Nick Davies is a Senior Lecturer in Events and Tourism at Glasgow Caledonian University. His research interests cover leisure under the broad umbrella of human environment interactions. Recent projects include: an analysis of the relationship of leisure, blue space and wellbeing; an assessment of the tensions underpinning Active Travel as a policy term; and an investigation of the bounce-back of community events post-Covid. Nick has been involved in a range of projects from EU and international level analyses of cycle tourism, rural tourism, and Nature-Based solution to regional and local economic and social impacts of leisure travel in this space.

Angela Smith is a Research Fellow within the Energy Demand Research Centre (EDRC), based at the Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds. As part of the EDRC Place Theme she is researching the potential for a place-based focus to support a fairer and more effective transition to sustainable transport and energy use practices. Her previous research includes E-Drone project and Future Flight projects and analysis of visitor transport in rural locations using social practice approaches in the New Forest National Park.

Flexible Work, More Equitable Leisure: Lessons from a Four-Day Work Week Pilot in Higher Education

Gabrielle Donnelly (Acadia University, Canada)

Mary Sweatman (Acadia University, Canada)

Rebecca Casey (Acadia University, Canada)

Erin Richelle (Acadia University Alumna '24, Canada)

Jessica Riddell (Bishop's University and Acadia University, Canada)

Sufia Langevin (Bishop's University Alumna '24, Canada)

Abstract

As the demand for integrating social justice principles into workplace structures grows (as well as creates backlash), some organizations are exploring systemic strategies that can enhance employee well-being while maintaining operational efficiency (Kishan Varma, et al., 2024). One such approach is the four-day work week (4DWW), a model where employees work four days instead of five without a reduction in pay. The 4DWW is designed to improve work-life balance, organizational sustainability, and workforce retention, aligning with the evolving nature of work in many sectors (Jahal, et al., 2024; Rae & Russell, 2025).

This presentation will share findings from a research study conducted on a 4DWW pilot program at Acadia University (Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada) during the summer of 2024. The study examines the intersection of work, leisure, and well-being, particularly how the redistribution of time impacts workforce development and leisure engagement. Findings reveal that participants reported enhanced physical and mental well-being, improved job satisfaction, a better balance between paid work, obligatory work and leisure, and increased meaningful leisure activities, including serious leisure pursuits. By allowing employees greater autonomy over their schedules, the additional day off facilitated recreational and community-based leisure participation, reinforcing the connection between work policies and more equitable access to leisure time.

From a workforce development perspective, the 4DWW highlights the importance of rethinking human resource management practices. With increasing recruitment and retention challenges, organizations are increasingly tasked with designing work structures prioritizing employee well-being while sustaining their daily operations and mandate. The findings contribute to broader discussions on power dynamics in the workplace (Kasser & Sheldon, 2009), the role of flexible work policies in fostering an inclusive and sustainable workforce (Boamah, et al., 2022), and the implications for leadership and management around the value of leisure and work-life balance (Cheng, et al., 2020; Rashmi & Kataria, 2022; Veal, 2022).

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Gabrielle Donnelly, *Associate Professor, Community Development, Acadia University.* Gabrielle Donnelly (she/her) is dedicated to supporting communities and leaders in bridging the theory and practice of social change. As an educator, scholar, facilitator, and change practitioner, Gabrielle partners with communities, organizations, and networks invested in creating a world where all can flourish. Recently, she has worked with organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Bioneers, The Mellon Foundation and New York City Child and Family Services. Gabrielle is an Associate Professor of Community Development at Acadia University and recently edited *The Handbook for Creative Futures* (Routledge, 2023). She lives in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia), Canada.

Dr Mary Sweatman, *Associate Professor, Community Development, Acadia University.* Mary Sweatman (she/her) is an Associate Professor in Community Development at Acadia University in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia). She is a community-engagement scholar-practitioner, her teaching and research interests include community-campus partnerships, experiential learning, and equitable community spaces. Her current research focus is in intersectoral partnerships focused on rural housing and climate change, include the role of recreation. Mary is the faculty director of Acadia's Inclusive Post-Secondary Education initiative, called Axcess Acadia which is a post-secondary education pathway for students with self-identified developmental disabilities who cannot access post-secondary through standard admission processes.

Dr Rebecca Casey, *Associate Professor, Sociology, Acadia University.* Rebecca (Becky) Casey (she/her) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Acadia University in Mi'kmaki (Nova Scotia). She is a mixed-methods researcher who focuses on injured workers, older workers, aging with a disability, labour, and employment standards. Her work is community focused and she is a public sociologist. Becky is a research associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia.

Erin Richelle, *Acadia University Alumna '24, Bachelor of Science in Nutrition, 3M National Student Fellow '24.* Erin Richelle holds a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition from Acadia University (Nova Scotia, Canada) and is one of ten students to receive the 3M National Student Fellowship in 2024, celebrating leadership and innovation in higher education. With a passion for wellness and a growing interest in higher education, Erin has worked to improve institutional work-life balance by assessing the impact of wellness initiatives and their relationship with leisure. She continues to advocate for student experiences through projects promoting leadership, experiential learning, and demystifying the hidden curriculum. Erin's commitment to cultivating meaningful change transcends all facets of higher education.

Dr Jessica Riddell, *Full Professor of Early Modern Literature, Bishop's University, Jarislowsky Chair of Undergraduate Teaching Excellence, and Adjunct Faculty in History and Classics at Acadia.* Dr Jessica Riddell is a Full Professor of Early Modern Literature in the English Department at Bishop's University (Québec, Canada). She holds the Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair of Undergraduate Teaching Excellence and leads conversations about systems-change in higher education that shifts the focus from resilience to human and ecological flourishing. She facilitates dialogue at the national and international levels about how universities fulfil their public purpose. Her recent book, *Hope Circuits: Rewiring Universities and other Systems for Human Flourishing* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2024), is an expansive call for the reinvention of universities and the renewal of their social contract.

Sufia Langevin, *Bishop's University Alumna '24, BA Educational Studies and Social Studies, 3M National Student Fellow '22.* Sufia Langevin has a Post-Graduate Research Fellowship with the Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair of Undergraduate Teaching Excellence. She graduated from Bishop's University (Québec, Canada) in 2024 with a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education and Social Studies. In 2022, she became one of ten students awarded a 3M National Student Fellowship for Leadership and Innovation with the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, where she has remained highly involved. Her passion lies in governance and systems change, especially as they relate to dismantling barriers to education, creating a more inclusive higher education system.

Balancing Conservation with Outdoor Recreation Use: Findings from a Study of Stakeholder and User Behaviours in National Nature Reserves

Adele Doran (Sheffield Hallam University, UK)

Kate Dashper (Leeds Beckett University, UK)

Jase Wilson (Leeds Beckett University, UK)

Jason King (Leeds Beckett University, UK)

Abstract

This project was commissioned by Natural England, a government body, to address gaps in the evidence base concerning responsible recreation on National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in England. The aim was to understand how to effectively encourage and support responsible recreation, which minimises the impact on species, habitats, and cultural heritage at NNRs, and promotes and complements the Countryside Code. Six NNRs were selected that encompass diverse habitats with protected species that are negatively impacted by recreational users.

A phased approach to the project was adopted. Phase 1 involved a review of academic and authoritative grey literature relating to approaches to responsible recreation and the design of interventions. Phase 2 focused on understanding the site-specific recreational disturbances, assessing current interventions and developing relationships with the Site Managers and recreation user groups. This contextual knowledge was crucial to Phase 3 when we applied a structured Theory of Change process to design context-appropriate suites of interventions specific to priority disturbances and user groups at each site. The interventions and monitoring frameworks were designed using a Stages of Change Protocol based on a transtheoretical model (TTM) of behavioural change (Phase 4). Data was captured through observations, conversations with recreational users, interviews with Site Managers, and community engagement events.

A summary of the key findings and recommendations will be presented post-embargo period (March 2025). The findings are transferable to other NNRs and natural areas within and outside of the UK.

Presenter Biographies

Adele Doran is a Research & Innovation Lead at Sheffield Hallam University. Her research focuses on sustainable outdoor recreation, including gender equality, enhanced well-being through the outdoors, responsible recreation, decent work, and philanthropy. She works with both public and private organisations, and her research is widely cited by the media. Adele is an Associate Editor of *World Leisure Journal* and a member of the Editorial Board for *Leisure Studies.*

Kate Dashper is Professor and Director of Postgraduate Research Degrees at the Carnegie School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University. She has published widely on different leisure-related topics, focusing particularly on gender, the outdoors, and human-animal relations. She is currently one of the Managing Editors of *Leisure Studies* and a member of the Editorial Board for *World Leisure Journal.*

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Jase Wilson is a Postdoctoral Fellow in sport development whose specialisation is focused on outdoor, nature-based leisure, events, sport, and tourism. Jase is deeply passionate about researching the social worlds of Sport, Leisure and adventure communities. His current projects involve investigating 'responsible recreation' and behavioural change by visitors to national nature reserves (funded by Natural England) and evaluating the impacts of 'Active Through Football' funded by Sport England and managed by The Football Foundation. Jase is interested in inequalities in sport and leisure, emotion and affect, social justice and fairness, qualitative and participatory research, ethnography and other issues.

Jason King is a Senior Lecturer and researcher in the School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University. His research integrates an ecological framework with leadership and links this to adventure, leisure, tourism and education contexts. His primary research focuses on how leaders create and maintain relationships with new groups in challenging environments. Jason's interest in leadership stems from fifteen years of leading groups in a range of mountainous and water environments across the world.

Urban Tourism Planning and Equitable Access to Natural Protected Areas: Advancing Just Tourism

Minoo Esfehani (York St. John University, UK)

Abstract

Historically, the establishment of natural protected areas (NPA) aimed to protect the ecosystem and support society's wellbeing. A diverse array of leisure and tourism activities has been increasingly promoted as integral components of the services and benefits provided by the natural ecosystems in these regions. In environmental justice movements, there is a growing focus considering the intersections between the NPA setting and social justice (Milner-Gulland, 2024; Bennett et al., 2021). On the other hand, ethical and equitable tourism practices are receiving increasing attention in academia and industry (Paddison and Hall, 2023; Rastegar and Ruhanen, 2023). However, our understanding of the relationship between NPA development and just tourism has remained weak.

This chapter presents the findings of research on the multifaceted importance of equity of access (EoA) to NPA from socio-cultural sustainability perspectives. Applying a qualitative approach, ten interviews and two focus groups (FG) were conducted with the authorities of eight regional parks (RP) in Auckland, New Zealand, and members of the local and indigenous community.

The findings discuss the facilitation of EoA as a) pathway for enhancing three dimensions of socio-cultural sustainability in tourism; a) greater attention to less-advantaged groups in tourism planning; b) enhanced access for indigenous communities to their cultural heritage in NPA, and c) increased recognition of indigenous cultural and spiritual connections to the land. The findings provide a conceptual basis for urban tourism policy to better address equity and social sustainability directives in their decision-making, with the aim of promoting more just tourism and leisure in the context of urban planning.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Minoo Esfehani is an academic at York St. John University, UK working in sustainable tourism planning. Minoo has worked as a university lecturer, researcher and industry consultant for over 14 years in different countries. She is an expert in her field with a range of research and field experience working with universities, industry, national governments, indigenous communities and international organisations. Minoo published articles and book chapters and presented at several conferences. Her areas of interest and expertise include sustainable tourism & SDG, heritage management, natural protected areas, and local/indigenous studies in Global South.

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Physical Culture, Aging and the 'Lack'

Dean Garratt (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

This paper articulates a novel synergy of themes, linking physical culture, aging and corporeal development, through the twin lens of psychoanalysis (Lacan, 1977; Gibbs, 2023; Greenshields, 2024) and autoethnography (Garratt, 2015). While recognising the importance of extensive research reporting on the social, physical and psychological benefits of exercise on healthy aging (Bergland, 2018) and further acknowledging the role of focused bodywork as a site of resistance to negative depictions of aging and physical decline (Phoenix and Smith, 2010), this paper examines the tensions within a broader conception of health and well-being. In contrast with many traditional narratives reflecting a range of putative health and fitness related benefits or an enduring preoccupation with the exterior image of corporeal development – either as an instrumental rationality (Çakmak and Güllüpınar, 2023) or commodity of capitalist consumption (McGowan, 2016) - this account examines the interpenetration of aesthetic desire and spiritual development in bodywork as a form of quasi-religion (Jodamus, 2025). That is, the 'inner body's importance' (Gibbs, 2023), subjectively experienced and practised through ritualised physical culture and daily asceticism (Coon, 2020). Using autoethnography, the paper mobilises elements of Lacanian theory - desire, *jouissance* and lack (Lacan, 1977) – to provide critical insights into the relationship of inner-body asceticism, the storied practice of muscular development told by a former elite, competitive natural bodybuilder who remains existentially committed to leading an ascetic life. The paper concludes by reflecting on tensions arising through psychoanalysis of a life driven by the seduction and unending pursuit of an idealised body that is always unfinished and hence ultimately unattainable. Subject to the 'inevitable decay of age' (Gibbs, 2023: 69), the account considers implications for broader ontological questions and consequences linked to physical culture, aging and health.

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Presenter Biography

Dean Garratt is Associate Dean of International Programmes in the York Business School at York St John University. He has worked in Higher Education for more than thirty years, having held a variety of leadership positions including Professor and Head of School: Education, York St John University; Professor, Director of the Graduate School and Associate Dean of Research, University of Chester. He has to date more than seventy career publications and significant experience as a qualitative researcher on a range of externally funded projects and independent evaluations. He is a lifelong exercise enthusiast and former elite competitor in international competition.

Wine Tourism Branding Lessons for Leisure Destinations in Spain

Mar Gómez-Rico (University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain)
Arturo Molina-Collado (University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain)
Evangelina Aranda-García (University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain)
Jesús Santos-del-Cerro (University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain)

Abstract

Wine tourism is a strategic axis in the wine sector. The generation of preference for a wine brand is a key factor in increasing visits to wineries in leisure destinations. Therefore, knowing the main elements that influence brand preference represents an added value for the sector. There is research that refers to the relevance of brand communication and brand image as antecedents, but without considering the recent advances in the conceptualization of these constructs or the combination of both factors in the sector under study. This paper presents a model of wine tourism that considers the role of brand communication, with conventional, digital and social tools, and brand image, in tangible and intangible terms, as determinants of wine brand preference and, consequently, on the intention to visit the wineries where it is produced. For this purpose, we collected a representative sample of visitors to wineries of leisure destinations located in a country with a long tradition of wine, Spain. The results obtained present useful recommendations for tourism and winery managers offering a set of practical ideas that have great applicability in the business are. Furthermore, this research contributes to the fields of brand and wine tourism by proposing and testing a model of core wine products and important antecedents, providing evidence of the link between wine and wine tourism and, thereby, addressing a gap in the literature on wine tourism by deepening the understanding of relevant marketing factors that affect the inflow of visitors to wineries.

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Presenter Biographies

Mar Gómez-Rico PhD is Professor of Marketing at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain. Her research interests are focused on services, destinations, retailing, wine tourism, social media, and branding. She has presented several research at international conferences such as EMAC, AMS and so on. She has published in journals including the Business Research Quarterly, Current Issues in Tourism, International Journal of Tourism Research, International Journal of Hospitality Management, Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, Tourism Management, among others. She has won the Extraordinary Doctorate Prize at the University of Castilla-La Mancha.

Arturo Molina-Collado PhD is Professor of Marketing at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain. His research interests are focused on branding, retailing, social media, destinations, and tourism. He has published in journals including Annals of Tourism Research, Current Issues in Tourism, European Journal of Marketing, International Journal of Tourism Research, Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Tourism Management, among others. He has spent several periods of research at European, North American and Canadian Universities. He has won several awards for his research.

Evangelina Aranda-García PhD is Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Economy at the University of Castilla-La Mancha. Her teaching and research interests are focused on economic policy, retailing, and digital economy. She is the author and co-author of several books about trade policy. In addition, she has published in journals such as the British Food Journal, International Journal of Consumer Studies, Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, Studies in Higher Education or Tourism Management. She has been Vice-chancellor during eight years at the University of Castilla-La Mancha.

Jesús Santos-del-Cerro PhD is Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Economy at the University of Castilla-La Mancha. His teaching and research interests are focused on statistics, economy, hospitality, tourism, and sports. He is the author and co-author of several books. In addition, he has published in journals such as the Anales de Psicología, Biology of Sport, European Journal of Sport Science, International Journal of Consumer Studies, International Journal of Hospitality Management, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, or Journal of Sports Science & Medicine. He has been the Director of the Quality Office at the University of Castilla-La Mancha.

Everyday Ageism: Deconstructing Intensive Grandparenting in the Context of Family Leisure

Shannon Hebblethwaite (Concordia University, Canada)

Abstract

The dominant discourse of ageing reflects a biologically deterministic view of ageing as a process of inevitable decline. This *decline narrative* begins at middle age and continues relentlessly into old age (Gullette, 1997). This discourse renders older adults invisible, particularly older women. Family leisure scholarship, shaped by normative assumptions around age and family composition, has limited our understanding of what it means to engage in 'family' leisure and has given precedence to coupled parents with children (Hebblethwaite, 2017). It is typical in Western cultures, for example, to find expectations related to generativity and obligation, contingent on the request and sanctioning by the parent. This norm is closely linked to discourses of intensive mothering, reflecting what Hays (1996) suggests as the underlying tenet of intensive mothering – the unselfish nurturing of the child. This ideology implores mothers to expend enormous amounts of time on their children, resulting in tensions for mothers in paid employment which often implicates grandparents in this neoliberal discourse. Grandparents are often expected to provide care for grandchildren, yet parents are the gatekeepers of contact with grandchildren (Buchanan & Flouri, 2008) and play a considerable role in regulating how grandparents should be involved with their grandchildren.

Using examples from empirical research that explored grandmothers' experiences with digital media, I attend to the ways in which leisure and digital technologies have both resisted and reinforced the norm of a "good grandparent". Cultural values of individualism and familism, notions of grandparents as mentors for younger parents, as transmitters of cultural values and heritage, or as agents of socialization are all implicated in the meaning-making around family leisure for grandparents. I look to illuminate the grandparent role as a process that commonly goes unnoticed because it is taken for granted, despite being a site for the negotiation of intergenerational tensions.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Shannon Hebblethwaite's research centres around the complexities and nuances of the experience of leisure for marginalized peoples, including older people, first time mothers, and persons living with disabilities. More specifically, her research explores the social and political systems and institutions that shape, facilitate, and hinder inclusion and social engagement, specifically in the contexts of family relationships, digital technologies, social policy, and interage (intergenerational) relations. Taking a critical and community-engaged approach, her work disrupts traditional narratives and discourses, challenges ageist assumptions, and encourages a more intersectional approach to understanding the impact that leisure has on wellbeing.

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Embodied Geographies: Knowledge, Authority, and Worldviews in Mandarin-speaking Mountaineering Communities in Japan

Jingzhi Huang (University of Tokyo, Japan)

Abstract

This research investigates how Mandarin-speaking mountaineering communities in Japan construct distinct worldviews through embodied practices. Drawing on nine months of ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews, I conceptualize "embodied localized knowledge systems", which integrate immediate bodily experience, digital technology, and transnational mobility to establish new forms of authority and expertise. This framework builds on Lewis's (2000) concept of "the climbing body" and Crouch's (2000, 2003) work on "embodied lay geographies" and performativity. It emphasizes how embodied knowledge emerges through contextual practices such as equipment choices, pacesetting decisions, risk assessment strategies, and the co-construction of space.

My analysis reveals that Mandarin-speaking mountaineers navigate Japanese mountains as spaces where multiple, sometimes competing, meanings coexist they are simultaneously sacred Shinto landscapes, commercialized tourist attractions, competitive athletic arenas, and performative social media backdrops. As Kikuchi (2001) documented, religious significance recedes, these mountains are increasingly redefined as "spaces of sport," where social hierarchies and cultural politics shape interactions. Digital platforms like Yamap further mediate embodied experiences, transforming individual physical encounters into collective knowledge through standardized metrics. These metrics not only influence personal mountaineering practices but also contribute to Mandarin-speaking community boundary-making and the negotiation of expertise. The tensions between Mandarin-speaking resident mountaineers and visiting Chinese tourists illustrate how embodied knowledge can become a site of contestation within East Asian mobility contexts.

This research highlights how embodied knowledge is mediated through digital technologies and transnational mobility, and how shifting temporalities between urban life and mountain rhythms reorganize social hierarchies and expertise within outdoor spaces. In doing so, it reveals how globalized leisure practices are not only shaped by economic and cultural flows but also negotiated through physical engagement, technological mediation, and localized knowledge transmission within transnational communities.

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Presenter Biography

Jingzhi Huang is a master's student in Interdisciplinary Information Studies at the University of Tokyo and holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of Connecticut. Jingzhi's current research explores embodied knowledge practices among Mandarin-speaking mountaineering communities in Japan. Jingzhi investigates how leisure activities become sites of identity formation and cultural negotiation through ethnographic fieldwork in Tokyo and Japanese mountain regions. Jingzhi's academic interests include emotion studies and participatory research methods. Through this work, Jingzhi aims to understand how transnational communities create belonging through embodied practices in recreational contexts.

Emotion Work of Parents of Autistic Children on Holiday

Allan Jepson (University of Hertfordshire, UK)

Brian Garrod (Swansea University, UK)

Raphaela Stadler (MCI, Austria)

Abstract

Background: The benefits of family holidays are well documented formally and informally in our societies, yet these benefits are often false promises to parents of autistic children who deliver higher degrees of emotion work to manage their own emotions, the emotions of their autistic children and siblings and those of other holiday makers.

Methods: Our work is situated within the humanist philosophy where establishing trust is of paramount importance and within the social relational model of disability (Jepson et al., 2023; Martin, 2013). We employed semi-structured interviews with 20 parents with one or more autistic children (aged 4-16) about their holiday experiences. Following interview transcription, we used NVivo for inductive data analysis and followed Braun and Clarkes (2021) stepwise coding strategy of developing open, axial, and theoretical codes.

Results: Our paper demonstrates the complex emotional landscape of holidaymaking in the context of parents of autistic children. Our study distinguishes between the emotional labour performed by tourism providers and the emotion work undertaken by parents during family holidays. While theories of emotional labour and emotion work are often conflated, they involve different actors, processes, and implications.

Conclusion: Our paper advocates for redefining parental efforts as "emotion work", highlighting its unique sociological implications in contrast to emotional labour. This perspective addresses a significant gap in leisure research concerning families with autistic children and provides insights into how emotion-management responsibilities can be redistributed to alleviate some of the emotion work faced by parents.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Allan Jepson is Principal Lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire. His pioneering research critically examined community festivals, uncovering power imbalances that excluded local communities from the planning process. He has since dedicated his research to understanding contemporary leisure experiences, exploring their impact on well-being across various domains, including critical gerontology, community events, mental health, quality-of-life, and tourism. Dr Jepson's work investigates the intricate interplay between sociological, physiological, and psychological outcomes of leisure. Currently, his research focuses on neurodiversity and its implications for creating inclusive and accessible leisure practices for all.

Raphaela Stadler is Professor for Tourism and Event Management at MCI – Management Center Innsbruck, Austria. She holds a PhD from Griffith University, Australia, and spent several years as a senior lecturer in Event Management at the University of Hertfordshire (UK). She is currently working on various multidisciplinary research projects to better understand the sociological and psychological impacts contemporary leisure experiences (festivals, events, and tourism) have upon individuals, families, and communities. Her specific research interests and areas of expertise include community events and festivals, community cultural development, power and empowerment, memories, as well as wellbeing and quality-of-life.

Professor Brian Garrod is the author of eight textbooks and more than 50 research articles, focusing mainly on the marketing and management of tourism destinations. He is co-editor-in chief of the Journal of Destination Marketing & Management and sits on the editorial board of seven other academic journals. He has undertaken research for a wide range of organisations, including the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Union Interreg IIc fund, the Welsh Government, Visit Wales, the Countryside Agency and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

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Exploring the Relationship between Environmental Attitudes and Adventure Tourism Motivations: The Case of Surfers

Thomas Karagiorgos (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

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Kostas Alexandris (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

Abstract

The attributes of natural environment play a central role in attracting adventure tourists (Webb, 2018). Similarly, environmental attitudes play a key role in adventure tourism industry, as they influence a choice of specific destinations and activities by recreationists (Paudel et al., 2022). Therefore, recognizing recreationists' positive environmental attitudes is particularly important for destination managers and policy makers who target nature-based tourists (Kil et al., 2014). Research has shown that different types of motives might have different influences on the development of positive environmental attitudes (Kil et al., 2014; Teisl & O'Brien, 2003). The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between adventure motivation tourism and environmental attitudes among surfers. The most widely used model to measure environmental attitudes is Dunlap et al.'s (2000) revised New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) scale which consists of five dimensions: Reality of Limits to Growth, Anti-anthropocentrism, Fragility of Nature's Balance, Rejection of Exceptionalism and Possibility of an Eco-crisis. The NEP implies an emergence of new set of values related to people's perception of nature and its relation to human beings (Luo & Deng, 2007, p.394). Data will be collected via an online questionnaire, with a convenience sample of one hundred fifty international surfers. The respondents will be recruited via surfing blogs and social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram). The validity and reliability of the scales will be tested; descriptive and inferential statistics will be used to analyse the data. The study will give information on the types of motivation which are important for the development of positive environmental attitudes.

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Presenter Biographies

Thomas Karagiorgos is a lead researcher in the "Sport Management, Tourism and Recreation" lab at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He taught as an associated lecturer in both the Hellenic Open University and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. His research interests are related to consumer behaviour in sports tourism and leisure management. Also, his work has been included in high quality journals such as Leisure Studies, Event Management and European Sport Management Quarterly.

Evmorfia Giannakou is a post graduate student and currently works as a researcher at the "Sport Management, Tourism and Recreation" Lab of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Her research interest is focused on sustainability in sports tourism, the integration of recreation and sustainable development and environmental perceptions.

Olga Polyakova (MSc LLM, PhD) is a director of the professional doctorate programme Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) at Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University. In her research, Olga specializes in consumer behaviour and sports events; she is a member of journal editorial boards (Event Management Journal; Frontiers in Sustainable Tourism) and an author of publications in the areas of sport participation, leisure, and sponsorship.

Apostolia Ntovoli (MSc, PhD) is a Lecturer in the program of PE education and Sports Sciences at Frederick University (Cyprus), and she is also a lecturer in a significant number of Sport Management Master programs. She is a Research Assistant within the "Sport, Tourism and Leisure Management" Lab (PHED - AUTH) and she has extensive teaching experience in the fitness industry. Her research interest is in Sport, Tourism, and Fitness Consumer Behavior.

Kostas Alexandris (MEd, MA, PhD) is a Professor at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. He has published more than 60 research papers in leading international journals. His published work has received more than 7000 international citations, so far. He is Associate Editor of Managing Sport and Leisure, Regional Editor of Leisure Studies, and participates in the editorial board of several journals (Sport Marketing Quarterly, Sport Management Review, Journal of Service Theory and Practice). His research interest is in the area of sport, tourism, and leisure consumer behavior.

Exploring the Financial Impact and Feasibility of Community-based Healing through the Arts for Children and Adolescents Experiencing Psychosocial Challenges

Asif R. Khowaja (Brock University, Canada)

Abstract

Background: Early-life issues like family dynamics, trauma, and abuse can negatively impact social and economic wellbeing (Nurius et al., 2015). Community-based Healing and Engagement Through Arts (HEART) programs are closely associated with leisure activities, providing participants with meaningful, enjoyable, and therapeutic experiences through drawing, painting, sculpture and collage (Boekhoven et al., 2012). While art-therapy is common in clinical settings, there is limited research on the economic impacts and feasibility of HEART programs from a leisure studies perspective (Brimblecombe et al., 2017).

Objective: This study aimed to assess the feasibility, financial costs, and cost-effectiveness of HEART programs for children and youth experiencing emotional distress or trauma without a clinical diagnosis.

Methodology: A scoping review was conducted using three online databases (PubMed, Wiley, Cochrane Library) for articles published from 2015 to 2024. Thirteen studies were included, from which data on study characteristics and economic value were extracted (Fatori et al., 2018; Hergenrather et al., 2009).

Results: Findings suggest that community-based art therapy programs are feasible and offer direct benefits to participants, including opportunities for social connection, creativity and self-expression, stress relief, relaxation, and empowering environments for personal growth (Collins et al., 2023). Indirect benefits include reduced absenteeism in schools/workplaces, lower crime rates, and decreased homelessness, contributing to long-term savings in mental and physical health costs and overall economic wellbeing (Lin et al., 2018). Participation fee range from $120 to $175 per session, with program costs influenced by condition severity (Scope et al., 2017). However, lack of public funding for these services may prevent economically disadvantaged families from accessing care. Group-based interventions were found to offer incremental benefits over individualized programs, though they are less resource-intensive and more accessible (Sitzer & Stockwell, 2015).

Conclusions: This study highlights the direct and indirect benefits of community-based art therapy in promoting well-being and group healing (Ramirez & Haen, 2021). Future research should explore the role of technology in enhancing accessibility and reducing costs (Brimblecombe et al., 2017).

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Presenter Biography

Dr Khowaja's research focuses on the economic impacts of community-based approaches to promote quality of life and wellbeing. He has applied economics modelling and mixed-methods research to inform policy decisions about resource allocation. Specific areas he has researched include the economic impact of quality improvement initiatives, the cost-effectiveness of community-based interventions, and patient-oriented research for measuring societal costs.

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Feminist Placemaking in Leisure: A Scoping Review of Gender-Responsive Public Spaces and Adolescent Wellbeing

Katie King (North Carolina State University, USA)

Michael B. Edwards (North Carolina State University, USA)

Kimberly A. Bush (North Carolina State University, USA)

Abstract

Leisure spaces, including parks, gyms, and recreation facilities have long been shaped by patriarchal norms that privilege male participation and visibility, often leading to the exclusion or marginalization of girls and women (Aitchison, 2003; Wearing, 1998). Leisure influences individual and community health which directly impacts quality of life. Feminist placemaking challenges these inequities by integrating gender-responsive approaches to leisure design, ensuring public and recreational spaces foster inclusion, agency, and wellbeing (Whitzman et al., 2012). This step towards social justice creates a direct pipeline for increasing access and opportunities for health benefits in spaces often consumed by boys and men. According to J. Arinder (2020), feminist theory draws on the voices and lived experiences of all individuals facing oppression. Employing a feminist theory allows us to uncover the inequalities, cultural meanings, and power dynamics that inform experiences and reactions within these spaces (Bassam, 2023). This gender-responsive approach means recognizing and addressing the diverse needs, viewpoints, and representations of all genders. To be truly responsive, initiatives must extend beyond raising awareness and actively combat inequalities and foster gender equality (Groves-Williams, 2024).

This scoping review addresses a critical gap by examining how feminist placemaking principles intersect with adolescent health outcomes in leisure spaces. While feminist placemaking has been explored in urban planning and public health, its specific applications to leisure environments and their impact on adolescent physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing remain under examined. The methods follow Arskey and O'Malley's framework (2005) by systematically mapping existing literature across these disciplines, this review identifies emerging connections, areas for further research, and opportunities to advance gender-equitable leisure spaces. Findings will provide a conceptual roadmap for future leisure research and practice, identifying both the theoretical and applied implications of feminist placemaking in fostering equitable leisure spaces.

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Presenter Biographies

Katie King is a second-year doctoral student at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC. Her research interests include community health, gender equity in sports, sobriety within recreation, sport, and leisure, and feminist placemaking. She has experience working in both the public sector and nonprofit agencies delivering health education and recreation programming throughout Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan. She also serves as DEIJ chair for the department's Graduate Student Association and for the College of Natural Resources. She has a very cute puppy named Burke.

Mike Edwards is an Associate Professor of Sport Management at NC State University, where he teaches courses in sport finance, event management, and research methods. His scholarship focuses on sport for development, with an emphasis on health promotion, youth engagement, and community partnerships. Mike also serves as an associate editor for Leisure Sciences and has led international engagement projects, including a recent initiative supporting youth sport and coach education in South Africa.

Dr Kimberley Bush is the Associate Department Head/Community Program Coordinator and Teaching Professor in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at NC State University, where she teaches a variety of sport management courses. Her scholarship is generally related to issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice as well as the mental and physical well-being of college students and student-athletes. The land grant mission is central to her teaching, mentoring, and scholarship; thus, she intentionally creates and fosters service-learning opportunities for students and engagement with local youth.

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Repetition and Resonance in Santiago Pilgrimage Walking: Exploring Motivations across Time and Space

Brian Komyathy (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland)

Abstract

The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela has evolved from medieval acts of faith to a modern phenomenon by a blend of religious, spiritual, and recreational motivations. My empirical data of 1,008 walkers (surveyed on the ground in Spain) shows that repetition is a significant facet of this modern activity, with 28.3% of respondents reporting prior walks. While medieval pilgrimages were once-in-a-lifetime endeavors, technological advancements and socio-cultural shifts have democratized access, enabling repetition. The reduction of spatial and temporal barriers (Harvey's concept of space-time compression) has redefined Santiago as a site not only of religious significance but also of personal and recreational importance. Contemporary walkers traverse to Santiago with motivations shaped by modernity, from physical challenge to cultural engagement. Survey data revealed that 79.5% of women and 76.4% of men are highly interested in repeating a pilgrimage to Santiago in the future, reflecting a persistent resonance with the activity. The survey found comparable attitudes towards physical activity between first-time and repeat walkers, suggesting that the repetition arises from a desire for continuity in meaningful experiences rather than a quest for novelty. This aligns with Rosa's assertion that resonance is achieved through sustained and meaningful engagement. 77.2% of survey respondents who declared a belief in the Resurrection of Jesus wished to repeat the walking experience to Santiago and despite the Camino's Christian origins, 79.8% who declared that they do not believe in the Resurrection of Jesus also wished to repeat this experience. The findings also challenge conventional tourism paradigms where brand loyalty often drives repeat visitation, as repeat pilgrimage walkers demonstrate attachment to place and to the challenging physical activity itself. By integrating Harvey's and Rosa's theoretical frameworks, this research contributes to leisure studies by highlighting the confluence of repetition, space, time, and resonance in a historically significant yet continually evolving activity.

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Presenter Biography

Brian Komyathy (M.A. in sociology from Lancaster University) is currently finalizing his doctoral dissertation in sociology at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Poland. Brian's research focuses on pilgrimage travel to Santiago de Compostela as sport tourism, blending work, sports leisure, and nature challenge activities. Brian (ORCID: 0000-0001-6756-4474) has published on the state of research into pilgrimage travel to Santiago, the sports leisure of Frederick W. Taylor and the philosophy of nature sports in general.

Race, Space and Place in Rural Leisure Lives

Viji Kuppan (University of Leicester, UK)

Abstract

Despite evidence of racism in the English countryside (Fowler, 2024), the idea of the "rural idyll" remains a durable trope. For example, speaking in 1993, the former Conservative Prime Minister John Major romantically opined: 'Fifty years from now, Britain will still be a country of long shadows on cricket grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs [and] dog lovers…' (Major, 1993, n.p). Over thirty years on, these beguiling depictions of village and country life remain intact. It is not that such images are false, rather, they are only partial representations, working to shroud a sometimes more difficult, and sinister reality. For example, more recently, the former Conservative Home Secretary, Suella Braverman wrote, 'to claim that the countryside is racist is one of the most ridiculous examples of Left-wing identity politics. It's a symptom of a deeper problem - the urge to constantly view everything through the lens of race and gender' (Braverman, 2024, n.p).

In this presentation I will re-frame, complicate and deepen our understanding of race and rurality. I will reveal the leisure lives of racialised minorities who live and visit rural locations. As a researcher for the *Rural Racism Project,* I will share some of these experiences, together with the "backlash" to discussing issues of racism and ethnicity. Moreover, I will focus on the everyday consequences for people of colour, particularly when visiting grand stately homes, rural public houses and national parks. I will offer empirical insights from conversations with over 100 participants and 20 community research partners that will demonstrate how in convivial rural leisure times, people find belonging and connection, but also experience racialised discomfort and discrimination. In so doing, I will highlight how co-produced, participatory, arts-informed, ethnographic/auto-ethnographic approaches help us develop an anti-racist praxis that powerfully and imaginatively speaks back to a racist society.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Viji Kuppan is currently a Research Associate on the *Rural Racism Project: Towards an Inclusive Countryside* at the University of Leicester. Viji is also a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Social Justice in Sport and Society at Leeds Beckett University. His writing, teaching and activism are most frequently animated by the intersectional inequalities of race, disability and gender, particularly in relation to sport, leisure and culture.

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Will Brands with Dynamic Logos Appear More Exciting and Authentic in Branded Leisure Metaverse Spaces?

Begona Paz Medina Labayru (York St John University, UK)
Dmytro Moisieiev (York St John University, UK)
Matthew Spokes (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

This research explores how dynamic logos—designed to evolve and adapt—influence whether metaverse users see brands as more exciting and authentic in the leisure spaces they occupy. The metaverse is an immersive virtual space where people engage in leisure activities such as gaming, socialising, shopping, and attending events, enabling real-time interaction as avatars, regardless of their physical location. As younger generations are already there, and participation across all demographics increases daily, brands are entering the metaverse to connect with audiences, often through gamified virtual brand experiences.

As technologies evolve and audiences adopt them, brands must remain aligned with market demands and trends. This requires unprecedented flexibility to adapt to a new exciting way of engaging with audiences within the metaverse, primarily for leisure rather than solely for commercial purposes. Unlike static logos, dynamic logos may better fit the exciting nature of these virtual leisure spaces and expectations about them, potentially increasing the perception of brand authenticity. We check whether this is due to brands with dynamic logos being perceived as more exciting. We also investigate how the sense of flow, i.e., being "there" and fully immersed, could affect brand authenticity. Furthermore, we explore how metaverse users perceive dynamic logos' consistency in the metaverse.

This study will involve an experiment in which 350 participants will play with two identical virtual leisure spaces, one with a static logo displayed and the other with a dynamic logo. Afterward, participants will complete a questionnaire assessing brand authenticity, personality, consistency, and flow in the metaverse.

This research contributes to understanding how logos could be successfully adapted to this new virtual era. It provides practical guidance for brands seeking to appear consistent, exciting and authentic in the metaverse while contributing to the knowledge about the interplay between logo design and brand perceptions.

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Presenter Biographies

Begona Medina Labayru is a Brand Designer currently pursuing an MA by Research at York St John University on branding in the metaverse. Her research focuses on how brands must adapt their branding strategies and visual identities to this new era, where virtual brand experiences provide innovative ways to engage consumers and reach new audiences.

Dr Dmytro Moisieiev is a Senior Lecturer in Business Management at York St John University. He has switched from a career in corporate strategic planning to academic research into consumer behaviour. His research is about emotion, consumer decision-making and branding. He also does consulting work for local UK authorities and not-for-profits on regenerative tourism and data analytics.

Matthew Spokes (York St John University, UK)

Rethinking Democracy in Public Parks: Ideals, Realities, and Future Directions

KangJae "Jerry" Lee (University of Utah, USA)

Abstract

Democracy serves as the foundational ideology and core identity of public parks. Since their inception in the 18th century in England, public parks have been developed across the world to make greenspace more accessible to people from all walks of life (Denby, 2024; Lee, 2024; Rosenzweig & Blackmar, 1992). Yet, researchers have argued that the democratic mission of public parks has rarely been fully realized and is, in fact, increasingly under attack (Lee, upcoming; Loughran, 2022; Madden, 2010; Mitchell, 2017). Furthermore, democracy in public parks has traditionally been defined in terms of universal access and public ownership. Limited attention has been given to how democratic ideals might be actualized in other aspects of parks such as development process, funding mechanism, and governance structure.

In this presentation, I critically examine democratic ideals of public parks, illustrating multiple pathways and varying degrees through which the notion of democracy can be conceptualized and operationalized in park contexts. First, I provide a succinct overview of democracy. Despite the diverse forms of democracy practiced over the past 250 years, freedom and equality in decision-making processes remain its central characteristic (Dahl, 2020; Diamond & Morlino, 2004). Second, through a focused literature review, I first identify three main stakeholder groups in park affairs - private, nonprofit (or NGO), and public - and five main aspects of parks - ownership, public accessibility, funding mechanism, governance structure, and managerial entity. I then cross-tabulate the three groups and five aspects to show that there exist at least 15 different ways to categorize public parks. Finally, I analyze the extent to which these 15 park categories align with or diverge from democratic principles of freedom and equality. Understanding this multifaceted relationship between democracy and public parks is essential for safeguarding parks as inclusive and just public space.

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Presenter Biography

Dr KangJae "Jerry" Lee (이강재: 李康在) is a social and environmental justice researcher who uses his research and teaching activities to promote positive social changes. His research has focused on (1) social and environmental justice issues in parks, outdoor recreation, tourism, & sport and (2) the relationship between leisure participation and subjective wellbeing. Jerry is serving as a Senior Associate Editor of Leisure Sciences, and his research and teaching have been recognized by multiple awards, including Best Research Paper Award from the Academy of Leisure Sciences and Opal Mann Green Engagement and Scholarship Award from North Carolina State University.

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Decolonising the Leisure and Tourism Curriculum: Ubuntu as a Framework for Social Justice and Transformation in Education

Berisford Lewis (York St John University, UK)
Minoo Esfehani (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

In the face of grand global challenges (George et al, 2016), the decolonisation of the leisure and tourism curriculum is critical for achieving societal transformation (Chambers and Buzinde, 2015). This paper challenges the dominance of Eurocentric perspectives in curriculum design, teaching and research methodologies within leisure and tourism studies, advocating for the integration of critical pedagogies to create a more inclusive learning environment (Karner, 2018, Nemouchi, 2014, Cohen and Cohen, 2015, Buggs et al, 2020). Drawing on the African philosophy of Ubuntu, which emphasises interconnectedness, community, and shared humanity (Vellah, 2017), this study explores how leisure education can be reimagined to embrace diverse epistemologies and lived experiences.

The prevailing Eurocentric curriculum marginalises indigenous knowledge systems and limits students' exposure to non-Western leisure practices, thereby reinforcing structural and racial inequalities in global education (Vellah, 2017, Chambers and Buzinde, 2015, Anderson et al, 2021b). By deconstructing traditional pedagogical approaches, this paper argues for the incorporation of critical, participatory, and reflexive methodologies that engage teachers and learners in meaningful and transformative dialogical experiences (Nemouchi, 2014). If leisure and tourism studies fail to reflect global realities in knowledge construction, it risks perpetuating epistemic injustice and failing to prepare students for an interconnected world (Chambers and Buzinde, 2015). Therefore, the task of decolonising the curriculum is to challenge epistemological orientation and representations that continuously appropriate other forms of epistemologies.

This paper employs Ubuntu as a conceptual framework to examine how leisure education can be redesigned to foster a sense of collective responsibility, cultural appreciation, and ethical global citizenship (Anderson et al, 2012, Dillard and Neal, 2020). Through an analysis of curriculum content, research methods of delivery, and pedagogical approaches, it advocates for a paradigm shift towards an education system that values diverse knowledge traditions, thereby aligning leisure studies with broader movements towards decolonisation, social justice and transformation.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Berisford Lewis is a distinguished academic and strategist dedicated to redefining business education. As a Senior Lecturer at York St. John University, he leads the International Business MSc programme, integrating real-world consultancy with academic excellence. With a background in education, the Hotel and Leisure industry, he brings a unique perspective on Business management, leadership, entrepreneurship, and strategic growth. His research focuses on community leadership, faith-based social enterprises, and business development. Passionate about purpose-driven success, Dr Lewis equips future leaders with the skills to drive innovation, resilience, and social impact in an evolving global economy.

Dr Minoo Esfehani is an academic at York St. John University, UK working in sustainable tourism planning. Minoo has worked as a university lecturer, researcher and industry consultant for over 14 years in different countries. She is an expert in her field with a range of research and field experience working with universities, industry, national governments, indigenous communities and international organisations. Minoo published articles and book chapters and presented at several conferences. Her areas of interest and expertise include sustainable tourism & SDG, heritage management, natural protected areas, and local/indigenous studies in Global South.

'Golf Is Joy, It Is My Life': Exploring Health and Wellbeing in Golfers with a Disability

Rhiannon Lord (Abertay University, UK)

Paula Murray (Abertay University, UK)

Ashley Williams (Abertay University, UK)

Graeme Sorbie (Abertay University, UK)

Abstract

People with a disability are more likely to be physical inactive compared to non-disabled people, and this has implications for their physical and mental wellbeing (Tough et al., 2017). Sport plays a vital role in increasing physical activity levels, in turn contributing to improved wellbeing in people with a disability (Lumsdaine and Lord, 2023). Golf has been highlighted as a sport that can increase physical activity levels in people with a disability (Monforte et al., 2021) and improve wellbeing in the general population (Sorbie et al., 2020), but, to date, few studies have looked at whether golf has the potential to improve physical and mental wellbeing for those with a disability.

This presentation reports on two interdisciplinary and interconnected studies examining health and wellbeing in golfers who have a disability. The first, a global survey of disabled golfers who were asked to complete 3 health measurement questionnaires – the SF-36 Health questionnaire, WHO Quality of Life (WHO) Questionnaire, and the Life Satisfaction questionnaire. Second, an interview study was conducted with a varied sample of respondents to examine patterns identified in survey data. In addition, participants were asked how health, golf and sport organisations support them in their day-to-day and golfing lives, and how support could be developed further. Findings of these studies will be used to facilitate workshops (funded by Leisure Studies' Maureen Harrington Fund) with key stakeholders and national governing bodies to co-construct knowledge of and potential solutions to existing challenges the disability golf community.

Findings suggest golf has potential to increase wellbeing for people who have a disability. However, some groups within the disability golf community are currently more likely to benefit than others. Accessibility to and experience of golf organisations, spaces, equipment and expertise were cited as key factors affecting individuals' experiences and wellbeing. Golf organisations remain committed to developing accessibility and experiences of golf for people with a disability.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Rhiannon Lord is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology of Sport at Abertay University in Dundee, Scotland. Her research focuses on the development of inclusive sport for all including sport coaches and athletes. She has experience of using narrative methodologies and embodied theoretical approaches to make sense of individuals' lived and storied experiences.

Paula Murray (Abertay University, UK)

Ashley Williams (Abertay University, UK)

Graeme Sorbie (Abertay University, UK)

Leisure with Aliens. The Leisure Hunting of Invasive Alien Animal Species and How This Impacts the Uptake of Conservation Messaging

Brent Lovelock (University of Otago, New Zealand)

Abstract

Globally there are over 37,000 cases of invasive species (animals and plants), collectively a major source of extinction and ecological threat (IPBES 2023). While invasive species are generally considered to be harmful, some play important roles as leisure resources (e.g., Hayes et al 2025). This may be on a massive scale, where landscapes been transformed by invasive plants, or individually, when we observe/engage with wild animals - but where those animals are invasive. This paper reports on one such interaction - between New Zealand hunters and Himalayan tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*). Tahr are introduced to New Zealand and have been branded by conservation organisations as an undesirable species due to their impact upon native biota. But despite ongoing conservation messaging (and official attempts at tahr eradication), tahr remain a 'Holy Grail' target species for many hunters. We interviewed 30 tahr-hunters, exploring how they characterise tahr and tahr-hunting, and the centrality of tahr-hunting to their leisure. We sought an understanding of the cognitive basis for tahr-hunters' relationships with tahr, considering the conflicting society-level and social-group ideals and value orientations surrounding tahr and their management in New Zealand. Our findings show that despite conservation messaging around the ecological impact of tahr, inherited and acquired peer-group cognitions of tahr as a majestic animal and valued hunted species prevail. Hunters demonstrated a variety of responses to the challenge that tahr should be eradicated (and thus that their tahr-related leisure be curtailed). Among these is that hunting of tahr is an inherited leisure 'right', a 'legacy leisure' often passed from generation to generation. Paradoxically, through their leisure relationships with this 'unnatural' invasive species, hunters also gain and demonstrate a deep understanding of and empathy with the very 'natural' nature that tahr are allegedly destroying. The study demonstrates the strength of entrenched (and loved) leisure habits in the rejection of broader official conservation narratives.

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Presenter Biography

Brent Lovelock is a Professor in the Department of Tourism and Co-director of the Centre for Recreation Research at the University of Otago. Since working in the conservation field and wildlife management, he has retained an interest in human-nature relationships. On this topic he has investigated the influence of nationality, culture, religion and ethics, with a recent focus on the intransigent and pervasive problem of invasive species and their intersections with our leisure lives.

Unpacking the Patchwork: A Mixed-Methods Study of a Regional England Netball Organisation

Sarah H. Mallinson-Howard (York St John University, UK)
Louise Morby (Freelance, UK)
Graeme Law (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

Netball is one of the UK's most popular female sports, with a strong grassroots presence and increasing professionalisation (England Netball, 2024). However, like many professionalising sports, it faces challenges related to governance, funding, and participation growth. In response, England Netball launched its Adventure Strategy 2021–2031, aiming to unify leadership and enhance collaboration across all levels through a Working as ONE approach (Ratcliffe, 2021). Despite this initiative, little research has explored how regional netball organisations implement strategic change and navigate structural challenges. Our mixed-methods study aimed to bridge this gap by being the first to explore organisational change within a regional netball organisation. It focused on participants' experiences, expectations, and key factors for effective regional governance in community sport.

Stage 1 involved an exploratory survey (N = 218) targeting both affiliated and non-affiliated netball participants in the region. Participant responses to quantitative and qualitative questions highlighted a strong desire for a more connected, inclusive, and competitive netball region. Stage 2 comprised a focus group with county netball association representatives (n = 5), further unpacking and identifying key challenges and opportunities. Preliminary thematic analysis identified four emerging themes: (1) Advocacy and representation – ensuring county associations feel valued and have a stronger voice in decision-making; (2) Strategic investment and facilities development – addressing funding gaps and infrastructure needs to support sustainable netball growth and club development; (3) Collaboration and connectivity – fostering knowledge-sharing and resource distribution across the region; and (4) Equity, inclusion, and tailored support – recognising regional complexities and promoting inclusive development strategies.

Overall, the findings underscore the need for a region-specific approach to governance and investment, equipping England Netball and regional stakeholders with strategies to enhance participation, strengthen local associations, and drive sustainable long-term growth.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Sarah H. Mallinson-Howard is a Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology at York St John University. Her research explores how individual differences and social factors shape engagement, performance, and well-being in sport and education. Employing a mix of methods, she aims to identify and remove barriers to healthy engagement, fostering more inclusive, supportive, and sustainable environments where well-being is prioritised alongside performance.

Louise Morby is an independent researcher and sport development specialist with a strong focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). As the EDI lead for a regional netball organisation, she actively promotes inclusivity in sport. Her research explores how social justice is understood and applied by sport development practitioners, contributing to an upcoming book chapter in Managing Sport Development. Previously, she spent 15 years as a Senior Lecturer in Sport Development at Leeds Beckett University, specialising in qualitative research. Louise's work continues to shape sport development, driving progress in social justice, diversity, and inclusion across the field.

Dr Graeme Law is an Associate Professor in Sociology and Sports Coaching at York St John University. His research focuses on the well-being and mental fitness of professional athletes, and how experiences within this environment impact on the relationships within their daily lives. The aims of his research are to challenge stigma associated with gender norms in relation to mental health challenges in professional sport and scale this into community settings, leveraging its success in professional sport contexts as a foundation for broader impact.

Is the Olympic Games bidding farewell to Legacy? - An investigation into the introduction of the new Olympic Bidding process stemming from Agenda 2020 (+5) and the New Norm, and its effect on Olympic Legacy.

Stephen Mills (University of the West of Scotland, UK)

Abstract

The International Olympic Committee in an effort to enforce a more sustainable approach to hosting Olympic games, as well as addressing the danger of the falling number of applications to host, has remodelled the Olympic bidding process, making it more collaborative and less expensive. The IOC's strategy for future games as outlined in 'Agenda 2020(+5)' and 'the New Norm' have embedded sustainable legacy into the bidding, planning, and hosting process, mandating that existing facilities are used wherever possible and only authorising new builds where there is a demonstrable demand, and a clear plan for use post-games.

This sustainable solution is a substantial change that will inevitably have consequences that will alter the Olympic legacy landscape forever.

Research Aim

To analyse the effect that the implementation of the new bidding process stemming from Agenda 2020(+5) and the New Norm has had on legacy discourse.

Research Objectives

1. To critically examine changes to the Olympic Games bidding process and their effect on Olympic legacy narratives.
2. To examine the multi-faceted discourses of legacy used within the bidding process to determine how the use of legacy has evolved practically.

Research Method

A collective case study of secondary research in the form of archival document analysis. Candidature files for the Olympic Games obtained from the Olympic World Library in Lausanne, Switzerland will be analysed.

The bid documents from Rio 2016 to Salt Lake City 2034 will be analysed. These documents have been selected because this is the point where candidate cities make legacy commitments and discuss the different forms of legacy. In addition to this, IOC meeting minutes, press releases and other relevant documents pertaining to the introduction, implementation, management, and review of Agenda 2020(+5) and the New Norm will be studied. By studying these documents using discourse analysis, over an extended period that includes major changes to the bidding process it will be possible to identify changes and analyze their effects.

Presenter Biography

Steve Mills is a second year PhD student, and he has returned to the world of academia after over a decade out of the classroom, having previously worked as a General Manager with over 25 years' experience working in the Sports, Health & Fitness industry. He has a passion for coaching and developing people and learning new skills and he is excitedly embarking on a new set of challenges whilst completing his research project. His PhD project will focus on the Olympic Games reform through the lenses of legacy and sustainability, and he is supervised by Dr Adam Talbot.

A Test of the "Class as Culture" Hypothesis: How the Social Nature of Leisure Has Different Associations with Wellbeing Depending on Socioeconomic Status

Steven E. Mock (University of Waterloo, Canada)

Bryan Smale (University of Waterloo and Canadian Index of Wellbeing, Canada)

Alex Silver (University of Waterloo, Canada)

Abstract

Socioeconomic status (SES) or class creates a culture that shapes our self-construal, namely, higher SES is linked to individualistic self-construal and lower SES to collectivist self-construal (Cohen & Varnum, 2016; Kraus & Stephens, 2012). Drawing on this pattern, we have found that the differing salience of collectivism based on SES has implications for leisure and wellbeing, such that the more social physically active leisure is, the stronger and more positively it is linked to wellbeing for those with lower vs. higher SES (Mock, et al., 2023). Here we examine these patterns with a broader range of leisure activities with data drawn from a Canadian municipal survey (n = 4,159; Smale & Gao, 2019). Three forms of leisure participation were assessed: social (e.g., socializing with friends), cultural (e.g., musical concerts), and home-based (e.g., pleasure reading). The social nature of these activities was assessed by correlating each of them with subjective sense of belonging then an overall measure of leisure "belongingness" was created for each individual that reflected the degree to which the activities they engaged in were associated with sense of belonging. Wellbeing was assessed with a measure of eudaimonia (e.g., "The things I do in life are worthwhile," King et al., 2016), and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). Regression analyses and probing of leisure/belongingness by SES interaction terms showed that the more those with lower (vs. higher) SES engaged in leisure associated with belongingness, the greater their ratings of both eudaimonic wellbeing (b = 24.78, p < .001 vs. b = 13.55, p < .001) and life satisfaction (b = 21.81, p < .001 vs. b = 9.02, p < .01). These findings contribute to an understanding of how SES shapes psychological perspectives and highlights the potential contribution of leisure linked to belongingness for the wellbeing of those with lower SES.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Steven E. Mock is an associate professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. He received his PhD in developmental psychology at Cornell and held postdoctoral positions at Lighthouse International in New York City and the Yale School of Management. Dr Mock's research interests are in the areas of aging and retirement, coping with stigmatization, sexual minority adult development, and leisure as a coping resource.

Dr Bryan Smale is an emeritus professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. He is also the director of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. Dr Smale was recently awarded the 2020 Hall of Heroes Leadership Award in recognition of his leadership that has had significant, long-term impact on the indicators field and the improvement of community conditions and well-being.

Alex Silver is a PhD candidate in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. He recently published his masters thesis research focused on the cultural omnivore hypothesis and an examination of potential explanations for the finding that those with higher SES have broad rather than elitist leisure preferences. His dissertation research focuses on bridging fandom and psychological wellbeing theory with the serious leisure model in the context of comic book culture.

Leisure, Space, & Dissent: The Temporary Autonomous Zone of Seattle's Capitol Hill

Rasul A. Mowatt (North Carolina State University, USA)

Abstract

Space as a production in our society is inherently in service to capitalism. Capitalist systems produce conceptual abstractions (e.g., empty, private, public, urban, rural, industrial, and residential). This abstract space facilitates a schema of control within an economic logic for the maximization of profits. So, making space a commodity, particularly in urban settings, impacts the lived experiences of those residing within it. Lefebvre (1968) argued that a populace should have a "right to the city", the ability and authority to shape how space is produced and used. Space restructured for the advocacy and expression of rights (whether official or unofficial) by a populace is a threat to that service. This dynamic creates a fertile ground for acts of dissent to occur in the city and for those acts of dissent to take root on the various spaces of contention. It is such a reading of Lefebvre as well as the experiences of political ethnographic field work during the summer of 2020 protests at the Capitol Hill Organized Protest site (CHOP) and the formation of the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ) in the heart of Seattle, Washington in the United States during the month of June 2020 that establishes this presentation as a rethinking of the original intent of Lefebvre's (1974) conceptualization of the production of space as a spatialization of Marxism. Parks, community centres, police stations, and other buildings and spaces were occupied for a 30-day temporary autonomous zone, and for a brief period demonstrated a communities internalised capacity to democratise the taking care of each other.

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Presenter Biography

Rasul A. Mowatt, PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Currently, the Department Head of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management in the College of Natural Resources and Affiliate Professor in Sociology + Anthropology at North Carolina State University. Formally, Professor in the Departments of American Studies and Geography in the College of Arts + Science at Indiana University. Primary areas of research: Geographies of Race, Geographies of Violence/Threat, The Animation of Public Space, and Critical Leisure Studies. Most relevant publication: *The Geographies of Threat and the Production of Violence: The City and State Between Us*.

Leisure, Labour, & Race: "10,000 Black Men Named George"

Rasul A. Mowatt (North Carolina State University, USA)

Abstract

From 1867 to 1970, 10,000 Black men were employed by the Pullman Company as porters (i.e., baggage handlers, butlers, tailors, shoe shiners, custodians, house-keepers, cooks, waiters, and personal assistants, all-in-one). The Pullman Company manufactured rail sleeping-cars as traveling hotels affixed to standard train cars. The demand or appeal were to White wealthy travellers who could no longer count on a slave labour force since the United States' Civil War ended in 1965, as well as to a burgeoning White middle class who aspired to have such proximity and provisions to luxury of service typically afforded to only the wealthy. The supply or labour force were the numerous Black men, now emancipated, that could not find other forms of employment due to racial discrimination in union-based occupation (roughly, 300 Black women were also employed as travel maids to tend to the hygiene needs of White women and child care). These men, in particular, were the back-bone of this form of cross-country tourism that flourished with over 26 million travellers per year. Alongside most other employees of the Pullman Company (i.e., the Pullman Strike of 1894), these men had their wages exploited (required to live in high rent company quarters), their labour extorted (monthly income, overtime), and their dignity appropriated (depictions in radio, TV, and film as well as forced to sing on songs owned by others). This presentation serves as a summary of the findings from a historical analysis of primary source materials (pictures, company records, newspaper advertisements), secondary sources (the work of other historians), song sheets and film stills, and site visits to Pullman National Historical Park (in Chicago). George Pullman, creator and owner of the Pullman Company, is the basis and reason that 10,000 men were named "George".

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Presenter Biography

Rasul A. Mowatt, PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Currently, the Department Head of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management in the College of Natural Resources and Affiliate Professor in Sociology + Anthropology at North Carolina State University. Formally, Professor in the Departments of American Studies and Geography in the College of Arts + Science at Indiana University. Primary areas of research: Geographies of Race, Geographies of Violence/Threat, The Animation of Public Space, and Critical Leisure Studies. Most recent publication: *The City of Hip-Hop: New York City, The Bronx, and a Peace Meeting*.

The Family Holiday, a Leisure Pursuit That Will Endure in Challenging Times

Susanne O'Reilly (Atlantic Technological University, Ireland)

Abstract

Research has established that the benefits of a holiday are short-lived, yet for many a holiday is a particularly important aspect of yearly activities. The commitments and effort to take a holiday are not fully reflected in leisure research, which has considered this aspect of leisure from various perspectives including holiday motivation and decision-making. Other studies consider the holiday for individuals at particular stages in life. However, what a holiday does, how it affects each member of a family unit, individually and collectively has not been fully explored.

From the discipline of sociology, the theory of social capital within the family (Coleman, 1988), and within a social constructivist paradigm, adopting a whole-family research methodology (Handel, 1996), the family holiday was investigated. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with middle-income families across nine stages of an established life-cycle model.

Using a two-step data analysis approach the findings were established. The first step, inductive analysis, generated twelve themes across the various stages of the life cycle. The second step, deductive analysis, then explored the themes under the forms of social capital within the family and leisure research. A definition of family capital within a holiday setting was developed (O'Reilly, 2022).

The definition of family capital provides a theoretical contribution, and as a form of balance leisure (Zabriskie and McCormick, 2001), can be explored further in core leisure. In practice family capital allows suppliers in leisure a fresh perspective to reassess their product and how it can facilitate the cultivation of family capital within their facilities. To conclude, delegates may consider a holiday from a different point of view, as a resource, something of value to each member of the family unit, and if managed effectively, assist in the building of family capital and the endurance of holidays in changing and challenging times.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Susanne O'Reilly is a lecturer at the Atlantic Technological University in Ireland. Her research stems from the many family holidays she had when growing up, which provided an emic view and unique perspective on conducting her doctoral studies. As a social constructivist researcher, Susanne is excited about the many opportunities that interviewing holidaymakers can provide. She now contemplates if building sandcastles on the beach has a greater impact on the holiday that researchers have ever considered but wonders if these thoughts are just castles in the air.

Leisure on Prescription: How Engaging in Leisure and Tourism Activities Can Enhance Your Health and Wellbeing

Brendan Paddison (York St John University, UK)

Jenny Hall (York St John University, UK)

Emma Sunley (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

Social prescribing is described as short-term intermediary services that facilitate patients with psychosocial needs to engage in non-clinical support. Social prescribing can include a variety of activities linked with voluntary and community sector organisations such as walking and community gardening. Many organisations, such as the NHS, are advocating social prescription as an important tool to expand the options available for GPs and other community-based practitioners to provide individualised care for people's physical and mental health through social interventions.

In the context of leisure and tourism, and in an attempt to extend social prescribing, this research argues that 'Leisure on Prescription' may also be seen as signification non-clinical support. There is an extensive and growing body of research that suggests engagement in leisure and tourism activities, such as sports, hobbies, arts and socializing, can improve physical health and mental wellbeing. For example, play as a leisure activity is linked with child development, creative activities can reduce age-related decline such as cognitive deterioration and dementia, and recurring social interactions can support inclusion and belonging. Despite this, leisure activities are often undervalued and are only engaged in when people have available time and resources. Furthermore, the capitalist commodification of leisure has resulted in a range of barriers to entry, such as increased costs of engagement and limited accessibility.

Drawing on data collected from a range of urban and rural contexts, this study demonstrates how engagement in leisure and tourism activities can enhance wellbeing and facilitate a sense of belonging. The study also identifies barriers to engagement such as cost and accessibility. We argue that there is an urgent need for a more structured approach to embedding leisure and tourism activities within social prescribing frameworks to ensure equitable access and sustainable wellbeing outcomes. This will require interdisciplinary collaboration between healthcare providers, community organisations, and policymakers.

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Presenter Biographies

Professor Brendan Paddison, Professor of Tourism Geographies and Dean of York Business School, York St John University. As an urban geographer, Brendan's research interests include tourism and destination management, spatial justice, policy, and collaborative forms of destination governance and development. Brendan leads the Visitor Economy and Experience research group at York St John, is co-chair of the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) and is Chair of the York Tourism Advisory Board. He is the Editor of the Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education and a member of the editorial boards for the Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism and the e-Review of Tourism Research journal.

Dr Jen Hall, Associate Professor of Tourism and Events, York Business School, York St John University. As a cultural geographer, her work explores issues of social and ecological justice in tourism, leisure, events, heritage and sport. Jen is an expert in governance and policy in tourism concerning urban heritage, spatial justice, and regenerative tourism in natural environments, and she is currently working with North York Moors National Park on a five-year research project to investigate climate crisis and conservation through public engagement programmes. Jen is a Fellow and Secretary of The Geographies of Leisure and Tourism Research Group at the Royal Geographical Society, and a member of the Other Everests AHRC Research Network. She has professional experience managing cultural regeneration projects in the public sector establishing and leading major venues, festivals, and cultural development programmes.

Emma Sunley, York Business School, York St John University. Currently studying for an MSc by Research in dark skies and wellbeing through the theoretical lens of nature connection. Having obtained a 1st class degree in BSc Geography focused on physical landscape and natural Earth processes, Emma is passionate about conservation of natural places through public engagement. Her MSc explores the role of dark skies in the promotion of a positive sense of wellbeing. In her Research Officer role, she supports events and projects including research groups gatherings, staff and student collaboration projects within the Students as Researchers initiative and organises a diverse range of research themed staff development sessions.

Balancing Nature-Based Tourism and Ecological Integrity: Mitigating Human-Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka's Protected Areas

Pathirana, M.T. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Warnakula, U.S. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

De Silva, M. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Heenatigala, M.S.H. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Abstract

The ongoing human-elephant conflict in Sri Lanka, responsible for the deaths of over 100 elephants and humans annually, poses a significant challenge to conservation efforts (Rathnayake, 2021). Simultaneously, elephants have become a key tourist attraction, contributing substantially to the country's tourism industry, with national parks such as Minneriya, Udawalawe, and Kaudulla drawing millions of visitors (Ranaweerage et al., 2015). The increasing tourist numbers, however, have led to a delicate tension between nature-based leisure activities and ecological integrity, particularly as tourism has been found to disturb elephant behaviour, causing heightened stress, aggression, and reduced feeding time (Ranaweerage et al., 2015).

This research explores how nature-based tourism can be balanced with the ecological needs of elephants and the surrounding environment, focusing on the intersections of sustainability, conservation, and leisure. As per the Köpke et al (2021) and Malley and Gorenflo (2023) this research used Social-Ecological Systems framework to employ qualitative interviews with tourists (56), local residents (42), and park officials (10) in key Minneriya, Kaudulla, Habarana, Kalwewa, Kekirawa regions in Sri Lanka. Data collection undertaken during April to June in 2024. Thematic analysis reveals that while tourism provides economic benefits, it contributes significantly to stress-related behaviours in elephants, particularly when tourists approach too closely or fail to adhere to park guidelines (Rathnayake, 2021). Such behaviours not only threaten elephant well-being but also escalate human-elephant conflict as elephants become more aggressive towards humans.

Recommendations from this study include the introduction of stricter regulations for tourist behaviour, such as maintaining a safe distance from elephants, limiting vehicle noise, and controlling the number of vehicles in proximity to wildlife. Additionally, implementing educational programmes on sustainable tourism practices and conservation, as well as introducing a conservation tax to fund human-elephant conflict mitigation, is crucial to ensuring the long-term protection of both elephants and local communities (Rathnayake, 2021; Ranaweerage et al., 2015). Achieving this balance is essential for addressing global environmental challenges while promoting sustainable tourism practices.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Madura Thivanka Pathirana is a Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management at Edith Cowan University, specializing in sustainable business management, with a particular focus on tourism. He holds a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, UK, and his research centers on integrating sustainability into business practices, especially within small island developing states (SIDS). Dr Pathirana has contributed significantly to the field of sustainable tourism through his research and practical initiatives, including his funded projects such as "Learning for Survival" and the "Sri Lankan Delights Initiative." He has supervised numerous postgraduate theses and developed courses on sustainable tourism and strategic management. Dr Pathirana is actively engaged in the academic community as an editorial board member for the *Journal of Management & Organization* and a co-chair for international symposia. He also contributes to community engagement through projects like the Sorabora Tourism Village and training programs for local youth in sustainable business practices, supported by DFAT Australia.

Sachith Himal Heenatigala is an experienced Sustainable and Renewable Energy Consultant with extensive management expertise. Holds a B.Tech. in Electrical Engineering and an MSc in Sustainability and Renewables. Proven track record in managing Solar PV projects, ensuring adherence to sustainability principles and regulatory standards. Skilled in feasibility studies, design, planning, and execution of renewable energy projects. Adept at coordinating with stakeholders, optimizing performance, and implementing strategic solutions. Proficient in project management tools like PVSyst, SolarEdge, and MS Projects. Known for leadership, problem-solving, and driving efficiency in renewable energy initiatives, contributing to a low-carbon, sustainable future.

De Silva, M. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Heenatigala, M.S.H. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Living Stories: Co-Creation and Representation in Murals for an Inclusive Society

Esther Peperkamp (Breda University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)
Kristel Zegers (Breda University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)
Ilja Simons (Breda University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)

Abstract

As a form of creative placemaking (cf. Markusen & Gadwa, 2010), murals can be a powerful tool to help residents reimagine their neighbourhood and transform it into a more vibrant, beautiful and resilient place. Previous research suggests that visualising hidden local stories, historically significant events and local heroes leads to community pride (Brito et al., 2024; Furtado & Payne, 2023).

Creative placemaking also poses challenges in terms of inclusion (cf. Furtado & Payne, 2003). Firstly, it may be questioned to what extent the creative placemaking process is relatable to different groups of residents. And secondly, in an ever-changing society, is the outcome of creative placemaking - in the form of a transformed public space - also relatable to newcomers to the place? On the one hand, murals can perhaps introduce new residents to the city and its history. However, new residents also bring with them new stories and may have different views on public space and visual culture, for example because of a different cultural background.

This presentation will explore these questions, drawing on insights from a major mural project in Breda, the Netherlands. Since 2015, the Blind Walls Gallery association has created over 160 murals across Breda, depicting stories related to the places where they are located, making the city's history visible and tangible. These murals are developed in a co-creative process with local residents to ensure local relevance. Once installed, the murals will also become the subject of guided tours, creating opportunities for participants to learn more about (the history of) the city through the stories represented in the murals. The key question that will be addressed is whether and how these murals - in both their making and their use - succeed in being and becoming meaningful features of place for a diverse and changing audience.

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Presenter Biographies

Esther Peperkamp, PhD. is a senior lecturer and researcher at Breda University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands, where she teaches courses in Anthropology, Qualitative Research Methods, and Placemaking in both undergraduate and graduate Leisure Studies programmes. Her research interests include leisure and placemaking, mobilities, and communities versus networks. Her most recent publication analyses the social interactions in so-called 'community living rooms' in Leisure Studies (2024). She is involved in several Dutch and European funded research projects.

Ilja Simons, PhD. is a senior lecturer and researcher at Breda University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands. A sociologist by training, she completed her PhD at Tilburg University on the role of events in hybrid communities. Her research interests include storytelling, narratives, cultural heritage, and communities in the context of tourism and leisure. She is particularly interested in the way people construct identities, communities and places through storytelling and performance.

Kristel Zegers, MSc. is a senior lecturer and researcher at Breda University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands. She has conducted research on the economic and social impact of the Dutch Grand Prix in Zandvoort. Her main area of expertise is in creative placemaking, and the role of leisure and the cultural industries in urban development. She teaches several courses about placemaking in both undergraduate and graduate programmes of Leisure Studies.

Social Infrastructure and the Social Benefits of Leisure – A Proposal for a Conceptual Framework

Esther Peperkamp (University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands)

Abstract

The aim of this presentation is to further develop the conceptualisation of "social infrastructure" in relation to the social value of leisure (cf. Kuzuoglu & Glover, 2023).

The concept of social infrastructure shifts the focus to socio-environmental factors that support the social value of leisure activities. This focus is relevant at a time when informal groups are growing in importance compared to formal clubs and associations. Membership of formal groups has traditionally been used as an indicator of social cohesion and social capital, and a decline in membership would suggest a decline in social cohesion and social capital.

But although new forms of organisation may appear non-committal (e.g. project-based volunteering, informal knitting groups and book clubs) they offer new modes of social participation. It is true, though, that the social importance of such informal and small-scale networks around leisure activities is more difficult to capture.

The concept of 'social infrastructure' (Klinenberg, 2018) offers a way to conceptualise the social workings of leisure pursuits in today's society. The concept refers chiefly to physical places that create opportunities for social connectedness, such as libraries and community centres. This thought is embraced by policy-makers who encourage, for example, the development of community 'living rooms' and the adaptation of libraries as social hubs.

However, social infrastructure should be understood more broadly. We need to consider the complete set of places, activities and events in which people move and in which social interactions, connections and networks develop. I propose to conceptualise these elements (activities, events) as equivalent to places and as equally constitutive of social infrastructure. By looking at the interplay between activities, events and places, a new approach to studying and enhancing the social benefits of leisure emerges.

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Presenter Biography

Esther Peperkamp, PhD. is a senior lecturer and researcher at Breda University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands, where she teaches courses in Anthropology, Qualitative Research Methods, and Placemaking in both undergraduate and graduate Leisure Studies programmes. Her research interests include leisure and placemaking, mobilities, and communities versus networks. Her most recent publication analyses the social interactions in so-called 'community living rooms' in Leisure Studies (2024). She is involved in several Dutch and European funded research projects.

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Football as a Place for Women

Hanya Pielichaty (University of Lincoln, UK)

Abstract

Historically, the 'leisure landscape' (Aitchison, 1999) of sport has been fiercely gendered, defining and dividing individuals in binary terms; in turn treating women and men differently in policy and in practice (Pielichaty, 2024). The spatial dimension of sport in terms of land use, ownership and resources has also been contentious, and significant to our understanding of gender in/justice (Jeanes et al., 2021; Pavlidis, 2018). Football, a sport played by many for centuries, has predominantly been designed for, and privileged to, men (Woodhouse, Fielding-Lloyd, and Sequerra, 2019). In the past decade, however, the professionalisation of women's football and concomitant sponsorship deals, media coverage and increased spectatorship (Bowes and Pielichaty, 2024; Culvin, 2023; FIFA 2023) has challenged football's masculine persona, making it more accessible for *everyday* and elite players. This conference paper analyses football places amidst these changing times, to better understand whether football is evolving to be more spatially and socially inclusive. This paper utilises Paul's (2017) *dimensions of leisure* to interpret how the powerful action and imagery of women (players and fans) in football places may disturb conventional ways places and the people within them operate. This presentation has implications for researchers, governing bodies and policymakers, encouraging them to be better equipped to understand the spatial element of gender inequities across sport.

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Presenter Biography

Hanya Pielichaty is Professor of Sport, Gender and Inclusive Education at the University of Lincoln, UK and is recognised as both a National Teaching Fellow (NTF) and Principal Fellow (PFHEA) of Advance HE. Hanya's research expertise relates to sport and society, covering gender (in)equalities, gender justice, and inclusive higher education. Hanya founded, and now directs, the Critical Pedagogies in Sport (CPIS) network that has over 90 members internationally. In 2023 Hanya was invited to parliament as an expert witness to give evidence at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's inquiry into women's sport.

Theorising Leisure Speech Communities: Serious Leisure and Social Worlds

Aaron Pooley (Soonchunhyang University, South Korea)
Lawrence Bendle (Independent Researcher, Australia and South Korea)

Abstract

This project addresses the emerging concept of serious leisure speech communities (SLSC) from both a global and a local perspective. The SLSC has been identified in recent research among non-native speakers in South Korea (Pooley & Bendle, 2023a). Leisure speech communities are best understood within a leisure social world context by adding the additional parameters of linguistic majority and minority interactions, including majority, minority, and blended language, within and around leisure activity spaces. Generalizing, a leisure speech community emerges when minority and majority speakers share minority, majority and blended languages in serious leisure roles as *neophytes, participants, moderate or core devotees,* combined with social world relationships as active *regulars and insiders*, or interested *tourists* and *strangers*. From a global perspective this phenomenon arose from the leisure, social, and communicative challenges experienced by individuals taking advantage of novel population flows into East Asia. From a local perspective, similar challenges appeared as participants undertook casual, project, and serious leisure within their familial, educational, and social settings as non-native speakers in their host country. Here, these previously identified SLSC parameters are further considered within a conceptual matrix, which combines ideas from serious leisure participation and social worlds. In turn, this provides an elaborated model of a SLSC that can assist further research at the leisure and applied linguistics interface (Pooley & Bendle, 2023b).

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Presenter Biographies

Aaron W. Pooley (PhD, Linguistics) is an assistant professor in British and American Studies at Soonchunhyang University, South Korea. His research interests include leisure and language contact, leisure and the sociolinguistics of globally mobile populations and digital leisure interactions using mobile devices and applications.

Lawrence J. Bendle is an independent researcher in Australia and South Korea. His research interests include serious leisure, network analysis, leisure and tourism systems in Asia, arts and entertainment tourism, and community-based leisure

Alternative Funding for Leisure Research: Crowdfunding in the Global Community

Samantha Punch (University of Stirling, UK)

Abstract

Changing and challenging times in academia have resulted in decreased funding opportunities alongside increased competition. Crowdfunding is a relatively new way of funding businesses and cultural initiatives (Medeiros et al. 2017; Rykkja et al. 2020) and learning experiences in academia (Horta et al. 2022). Whilst rarely used for research, donation-based crowdfunding (Zhao and Shneor (2020) is nonetheless a possible alternative source for funding leisure research. This paper explores the practicalities, opportunities and challenges of fundraising within a leisure community. It is based on the experiences of *Bridge: A MindSport for All* which has crowdfunded research on the card game bridge for six years, including global donations to fund a new four-year international research study on Bridge, Youth and Mindsport Education.

The paper considers the time and space when Crowdfunding might be useful and how to persuade potential donors to support a leisure research project. It discusses the perception and recognition of such funding within both academia and the bridge community. Lessons learnt include how to launch and maintain a fundraising campaign, how to pitch the project messaging and branding, and the promotional use of social media. The paper also covers the process of learning to become an academic fundraiser (rather than grant writer), dealing with setbacks, building resilience and how to give back to the leisure community. Dealing with potential conflicts of interest is a necessary consideration when the community being researched is also funding the research.

The unintended consequences, both positive and negative, of a long-term Crowdfund Campaign are explored. On the one hand, it has been time-consuming with failed donor requests, some negative reactions and initial scepticism over motivations and intentions. On the other hand, it has enabled new avenues for developing Mindsport Studies, strengthened community partnerships, led to effective coproduction and resulted in significant research impact.

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Presenter Biographies

Samantha Punch is Professor of Sociology in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Stirling. Her research interests were previously within Childhood Studies. As an international bridge player representing Scotland, she is currently developing the sociology of mindsport as a new field of leisure research. The project, *Bridge: A MindSport for All* (BAMSA) explores the social interactions and dynamics of serious leisure, including emotions, identities, and gendered inequalities (https://bridgemindsport.org/). BAMSA has a new study on bridge, youth and schools, investigating the potential for mindsport education in Scotland, England, Denmark, Norway and the USA. All BAMSA research has been Crowdfunded from within the global bridge community.

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"AI and the Future of Fun": Pioneering AI Literacy Through Leisure Education

Susan Purrington (Northern Arizona University, USA)

Abstract

This presentation explores the innovative development and implementation of "AI and the Future of Fun," the first artificial intelligence literacy course specifically focused on leisure and recreation. Building on Bowen and Watson's (2024) framework for AI-integrated pedagogy and Mollick's (2024) principles of human-AI collaboration, this pioneering 3-credit course examines how AI technologies are transforming recreational experiences while teaching essential AI literacy skills.

The curriculum design uniquely integrates technical AI concepts with recreational applications across gaming, sports, and entertainment. Informed by recent industry analyses (Bertelsmann, 2024; Peranzo, 2024; Phillips, 2024), weekly modules incorporate hands-on experience with AI tools, guest expert panels, and critical discussions about ethical implications, particularly emphasizing Buolamwini's (2023) perspectives on protecting human agency in AI-integrated spaces.

Following Stommel's (2023) and Clark and Tolbert's (2023) alternative assessment philosophies, the course employs an "ungrading" approach that emphasizes practical skills over traditional evaluation. Students demonstrate mastery through three major projects: an AI-themed leisure playlist, an AI wellness tool concept, and a creative multimedia project. The assessment strategy incorporates Laist's (2024) recommendations for evaluating AI-assisted work while maintaining academic integrity.

Drawing from the AI-U/1.0 framework (Elon University & AAC&U, 2024), the course successfully bridges theoretical understanding with practical application. Initial student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with students reporting increased confidence in evaluating and using AI tools responsibly. The focus on leisure contexts has made complex AI concepts more approachable and relevant to students' daily lives.

This presentation will provide attendees with a detailed framework for implementing similar AI literacy courses, including syllabus design, assessment strategies, and recommendations for balancing technical content with engaging recreational applications.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Susan Purrington is an Associate Teaching Professor at Northern Arizona University with expertise in recreation therapy and digital leisure. A self-proclaimed inclusive innovation specialist, she has pioneered innovative approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in AI integration and universal design for learning. She develops cutting-edge courses like "AI and the Future of Fun" while advocating for inclusive course design. Her research focuses on generative AI, inclusive customer experiences, and professional fieldwork. Dr Purrington is the founder of welcomed here, Inc. and holds multiple certifications in inclusive teaching practices, including recent credentials in AI-enhanced education from ACUE and EDUCAUSE

Inclusion and Community Engagement through the Arts: Lessons from *The Valley of Art*

Onna Rageth (University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, Switzerland)

Abstract

In October 2023, local artist Romano Giovanoli opened an art school in the Italian-speaking Bregaglia Valley in southern Switzerland. This region is renowned for its rich artistic herit-age, exemplified by internationally acclaimed painters Giovanni Segantini (1858–1899) and Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966). From a tourism perspective, the valley is fittingly promoted as *The Valley of Art* (Rageth, 2024, p. 161).

Before the establishment of the art school, named *Panaläda* (meaning "brushstroke" in the local Lombardian dialect, Bargaiot), the valley's approximately 1,600 residents had no access to structured artistic activities. This absence was particularly striking given the valley's artis-tic reputation and the marketing efforts of Bregaglia Engadin Turismo, the region's Destina-tion Marketing Organisation.

More than a year later, it is evident that *Panaläda* has made a meaningful contribution to both community engagement and social inclusion:

Not only did Mr. Giovanoli successfully secure third-party funding to offer free art classes to four children from the valley, but he also attracted participants from neighbouring areas. This achievement is noteworthy, as "interpersonal encounters and interactions are essential for well-being and can therefore positively influence the attractiveness of both living and tourist destinations" (Pescia *et al.*, 2023, p. 7). As a result, this exemplary project highlights how community engagement fosters a shared sense of identity rooted in local heritage, while also promoting inclusion by enabling participation across all social classes, ages, and abilities.

This inclusivity is further enhanced by the use of the *Structuristic Art* technique, which in-volves layering diverse materials, colours, shapes, and patterns to create depth and structure. This approach not only generates visually striking pieces but also serves to preserve intangi-ble aspects of heritage, making them tangible for future generations (Ramsay and Barlow Sweet, 2009, p. 37). In general, this proposal aims to highlight the importance of leisure ac-tivities in peripheral regions.

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Presenter Biography

Onna Rageth holds a BA in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from University of Zurich and a MA in Creative Events Management from Falmouth University. She is secretary of the Leisure Studies Association and Editorial Board Member of the World Leisure Journal. Onna works as a research project leader and head of *Bregaglia Lab* (living lab in peripheral Bregaglia valley) at the Institute of Tourism and Leisure at the University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons in Switzerland. Her research interests include cultural heritage, tourism, social anthropology, Swiss history and critical events studies.

Heimweh and the Anthropocene: Reimagining Johanna Spyri's "Heidi" in a Changing Landscape

Onna Rageth (University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, Switzerland)
Miriam Stuhlmüller (University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, Switzerland)
Bianca Schenk (University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, Switzerland)

Abstract

Johanna Spyri's (1827–1901) *Heidi*, first published in 1880 and 1881, offers a romanticised depiction of life in the Swiss Alpine landscape. This vision has captivated readers worldwide, cementing *Heidi* as a cornerstone of children's literature. Translated into approximately 70 languages, the novel has inspired documentaries, feature films, and cartoons, transcending its literary origins. Its global significance was officially recognised when the Johanna Spyri and *Heidi* Archives were inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, a program established in 1992 to preserve and raise awareness of documentary heritage (UNESCO, 2019).

However, *Heidi*'s cultural relevance today invites critical reflection. What imagery does it evoke in contemporary contexts, and how might these images intersect with cultural-touristic and leisure settings?

The intersection of tourism, leisure, and heritage presents a paradox. While these activities often provide resources for preservation, they can simultaneously erode local traditions and environments. Heldt Cassel and Pashkevich (2014) caution that overdeveloped heritage tourism can even hinder socio-economic progress in destination areas. Understanding this interplay requires careful analysis and management.

The challenges become even more pressing in the context of the Anthropocene—a proposed geological epoch marked by the profound impact of human activities on Earth's systems. Tarolli et al. (2014) describe the Anthropocene as characterised by intensive farming, industrialisation, and urbanisation, which have significantly reshaped natural landscapes. This framing highlights the urgency of critically examining the relationship between tourism, leisure, heritage, and the environment, or better, in *Heidi*'s case, the human-environment relationship.

By evaluating the contemporary relevance of *Heidi* and its potential contribution to socially sustainable tourism and leisure activities, the research seeks to balance heritage preservation with the evolving demands of a rapidly changing world.

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Onna Rageth holds a BA in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from University of Zurich and a MA in Creative Events Management from Falmouth University. She is secretary of the Leisure Studies Association and Editorial Board Member of the World Leisure Journal. Onna works as a research project leader and head of *Bregaglia Lab* (living lab in peripheral Bregaglia valley) at the Institute of Tourism and Leisure at the University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons in Switzerland. Her research interests include cultural heritage, tourism, social anthropology, Swiss history and critical events studies.

Miriam Stuhlmüller (University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, Switzerland)

Bianca Schenk (University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, Switzerland)

Widening Participation in Landscape Recovery Projects in National Parks

Tom Ratcliffe (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

Community and stakeholder engagement is a critical approach to managing conservation projects in European National Parks. Strong community engagement relies on excellent communication between landowners, land managers, communities, the National Park Authority and other National Park stakeholders. However, in recent years in National Parks there have been instances where community values towards the landscape are undermined and excluded, framed by contested power relations which can impact on visitors' leisure experiences and perceptions of these spaces and places (Ratcliffe, 2024a).

This paper explores a current research project that investigates the impact of landscape recovery and rewilding projects in National Parks on the environment, tourists and communities from a social science perspective. The main aim of the project is to understand the values stakeholders in these protected areas attribute to these landscapes and the importance of stakeholder engagement in these changing landscapes which are under increasing threat from biodiversity loss and climate change. By applying participatory, action research, the project investigates how people identify with protected landscapes and the impact of landscape recovery projects on values and identities. The research raises questions around land ownership, power structures, community resilience, social and ecological justice, access to land, sustainable futures and, ultimately, what are National Park landscapes for?

In particular, the focus of the paper will be on how stakeholders consider more sustainable alternatives in decision making processes about land, leisure and tourism management – reflecting on 'environmental imagination' of these places in accordance with future systems thinking (Latour, 2004; Ratcliffe, 2024b). The project focuses on a variety of case studies which offer examples of different futures for recreation in these anthropogenic landscapes that are reliant on human decisions.

The research contributes to the established and growing area of research in the York Business School on Protected Landscapes and National Parks at a UK level and an international level.

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Ratcliffe, T. (2024b). Walking Methodologies in the Uplands of the North York Moors National Park. Sociological Research Online, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/13607804241275350

Presenter Biography

Dr Tom Ratcliffe specialises in Sustainability, Tourism and Heritage studies including research themes such as community identity and participation, contested landscapes, sustainable land management practices, land ownership, power dynamics and social and ecological inequalities. Dr Ratcliffe's research explores culture-nature relationships within the context of the biodiversity and climate crises in the Anthropocene. His research has focussed on green spaces mainly UK National Parks using social science methods including walking interviews. Dr Ratcliffe is also a member of the Visitor Economy and Experience Research Group, the protected landscapes and National Parks group, the Ecological Justice Research Group and the Living Lab at York St John University.

Where Has All Our Leisure Gone? The Case of the UK, 1960s-2020s

Ken Roberts (University of Liverpool, UK)

Abstract

The title of this paper refers to the leisure of the people, and also to the higher education faculties, departments, programmes and courses with leisure in their titles or contents. The paper reviews the current state of leisure and its scholars, and how we arrived here. The introduction of leisure studies into UK higher education followed a post-1945 boom in consumer spending that was unprecedented and remains unrepeated. Leisure time, activity and spending boomed from 1945 onwards under a social democratic political consensus. Growth was expected to continue which would give leisure a larger and, in some sense, a stronger role in people's lives (Best, 1978; Dumazedier, 1967; Parker, 1971). The boom in leisure was followed in the 1970s and 1980s with the creation of higher education courses titled 'leisure' and/or 'recreation'. 'Management' was sometimes added. In 1975 the UK's active leisure scholars created the Leisure Studies Association which began an ongoing series of conferences. Peak attendance was 275 in 1987. By then the context was changing. Social democracy was being replaced by a neo-liberal political consensus. The 'L' word was disappearing from course titles (Carr, 2022; Fletcher et al, 2017). Leisure itself was changing. The predicted growth was occurring but gains in leisure time were being soaked up by expanding retired age groups. Households with members of 'working age' were working longer. Gains in wealth and income were going mainly to those who already had most (Roberts, 2023; 2024). Neo-liberalism was squeezing graduate careers in leisure (and many other things beside). The courses and scholars were splintering into sport, tourism and their micro academic silos. The silos have become self-recruiting thereby losing the inflow of ideas from cognate disciplines. Leisure scholars have been quitting the social sciences and relocating into management and business schools, and health faculties. What is being lost? We risk losing sight of how leisure is being reshaped by, and helping to reshape, its wider political, economic, social and cultural contexts, and how leisure research and education can intervene in these processes (but see Blackshaw, 2016).

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Presenter Biographies

Ken Roberts is Professor (now emeritus) of sociology at the University of Liverpool. His first book*, Leisure*, was published in 1970. Since he has published regularly in books and scholarly journals. He is a founder member of the LSA.

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Free Media Sport and its Harmful Gambling Cost: A Leisure (In)equality Policy Paradox

David Rowe (Western Sydney University, Australia)

Abstract

For many decades, mediated (especially broadcast television) sport[1] has been a contested leisure space where (relatively) free access for citizens, via public service or commercial free-to-air broadcasters, has been eroded through the acquisition of rights by commercial subscription services.[2] Requiring payment to participate in screen sport's national rituals inevitably excludes and/or disadvantages substantial population segments who cannot afford such 'discretionary' leisure expenditure.[3] In many countries,[4] the nation-state has intervened in media sport markets by requiring that certain sport events should be offered first to free-to-air broadcast platforms via 'anti-siphoning' lists. In Australia, for example, 'events of national importance and cultural significance' have received some legislative protection from paywalls from the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* and the *Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005*. The intensifying challenge of digitisation to broadcasting by online (especially streaming) services[5] demanded changes to this governing legislation in defence of rights of cultural citizenship. Both Acts were updated by the *Communications Legislation Amendment (Prominence and Anti-siphoning) Act 2024*, increasing the number and range of listed sports (especially women's and parasport) and embracing online services to prevent total capture by them.[6] This technologically necessary reform, of course, did not settle disputes over revenue maximisation among professional sports and media organisations, with some claiming that 'freemium' streaming models now have equivalent audience reach to declining aerial-based broadcast services.[7] However, such debates took place largely without reference to another important sociocultural issue – sport gambling, especially online. Promised legislation on gambling advertising following the 2023 *You Win Some, You Lose More: Online Gambling and its Impacts on Those Experiencing Gambling Harm*[8] Parliamentary Report did not eventuate in 2024 after intense lobbying by sport, media and gambling interests.[9] This paper analyses the paradoxical implications for leisure (in)equality[10] of simultaneously defending popular mediated sport events while promoting harmful sport-related gambling through them.

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Presenter Biography

David Rowe, FAHA, FASSA is Emeritus Professor of Cultural Research, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University, with honorary positions at Bath, London, and Beijing Foreign Studies Universities. A member of Western Sydney University's World Leisure Centre of Excellence, he has published widely on leisure, culture, media and sport in journals and reference works such as Annals of Leisure Research, Leisure Studies, World Leisure and Recreation Journal, Encyclopedia of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation, and Handbook of Leisure Studies. Among his 13 books are Tourism, Leisure, Sport: Critical Perspectives (co-edited) and Sport, Culture and the Media: The Unruly Trinity (sole-authored).

Women's Experiences in Hobby Board Game Culture: Navigating Gender in an Evolving Leisure Culture

Ryan Scoats (Birmingham City University, UK)

Abstract

Research into hobby board game culture remains underdeveloped (Sousa and Bernardo, 2019), with gender dynamics particularly understudied despite comparable geek cultures often proving unwelcoming to women (Salter and Blodgett, 2017). This paper explores women's experiences in this male-dominated culture (Trammel, 2023) through 43 semi-structured interviews.

Findings show hobby board game culture remains strongly associated with masculinity and women frequently encounter a "board game gender gap" where limited early exposure creates barriers to later participation. While not necessarily common, some also experience sexism and misogyny reflected in assumptions around their gaming preferences, competence, and investment in the hobby—experiences which were often framed as stemming from problematic individuals and social awkwardness rather a being seen as a reflection of broader societal gender inequalities.

At the same time, however, an increasing presence of women (and men's acceptance of these women) was helping bring about inclusive change within the culture. The research thus identifies two coexisting board game cultures: an "older", more orthodox culture (associated more so with war games, collectible card games, masculine geekiness, insularity, and game shops) and a "newer", more inclusive culture (focused on customer experience, socializing, inclusivity, and found in meet-ups and cafes).

These findings illuminate how traditionally male-dominated leisure and gaming spaces can become more inclusive while highlighting persistent challenges. The coexistence of various board gaming cultures suggests transformation is possible but requires actively fostering inclusive practices rather than relying on organic change.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Ryan Scoats is a Lecturer in Sociology at Birmingham City University with expertise in gender dynamics, sexual behaviour, and social inequalities. His research broadly focuses on masculinities, consensual non-monogamies, group sex, and board game cultures. He has been published in prestigious journals including The Journal of Sex Research, Current Opinion in Psychology, and the European Journal of Cultural Studies

Sport, Physical Activity, and Inequalities: Examining the Scottish Policy Context

David Scott (Abertay University, UK)
David Meir (University of West of Scotland, UK)

Abstract

Since devolution in 1999, Scottish policy around sport, physical activity, leisure, and public health has seen the emphasis shift upon each of these areas in turn (Jarvie, 2023). Despite this change, figures around participation, physical activity, and health have remained obstinately poor, with several social inequalities being consistently reported as providing barriers towards universal access (Meir et al., 2024). The latest attempt to change this was the release of the Physical Activity for Health Framework by the Scottish Government in 2024, which was the result of a partnership of national organisations across sectors, including sport, physical activity, health, transport, nature, and academia, using a systems-based approach (Scottish Government, 2024). This presentation reports on the findings of a 10-month Scottish Parliament Fellowship undertaken by the researchers which aimed to explore how existing structural disadvantages might be addressed to increase participation levels across sport, physical activity, and leisure. This involved a review of current evidence pertaining to participation across Scotland, followed by 20 interviews with 23 individuals either involved in the development or the delivery of the new Framework. A report was then delivered to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee in the Scottish Parliament. This presentation will discuss the key findings from the Fellowship, which considers issues relating to the delivery of new policies, strategies, and frameworks within the context of Scotland. Key issues include the consideration of inequalities from an intersectional perspective, the contestation of key terms used and how this reflects wider policy priorities and power considerations, as well as the importance of implementing relevant monitoring and evaluation processes. Finally, the presentation will reflect on the experience of the Fellowship itself from the researchers' perspectives, with the opportunities and challenges of working with the Scottish Parliament on issues of sport, physical activity, and leisure policy being considered.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr David Scott is a lecturer in Sport Development at Abertay University, UK. His main teaching and research interests are around sport for development, social inequalities, and monitoring and evaluation.

Dr David Meir is a lecturer in Sport and Physical Education at University of the West of Scotland, UK. His main teaching and research interests are around sport for development, education, and sport policy.

A Study on How Kidulting Rationales, Neutralization Techniques, and Kidulting Intention are Related

Wee-Kheng Tan (National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan)

Yu-Min Wei (National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan)

Abstract

Kidult refers to adults who have interest in, consume, and enjoy lighthearted recreations and pursuits normally designed and reserved for children (O'Sullivan, 2023; The Economist, 2023). While kidultism is now sweeping the globe, many researchers and social observers have criticized this phenomenon. Kidults have been blamed for the abdication of responsibilities adults should normally shoulder (Hayward, 2013). Given the criticism, there is a possibility that kidults are worried that others will see them as being too closely associated with kidulting and will like to justify or find excuses for their behavior to reduce ill feelings and absolve their guilt. A theoretical framework to examine the excuses or justifications is the techniques of neutralization theory (Siponen et al., 2020). This study considers how kidulting rationales affect kidults' application of neutralization techniques, and how they then collectively affect kidulting intention.

Data was collected from 200 non-student adults (87 males and 113 females) belonging to the age group of 18-40 years via convenience sampling method. The path analysis using partial least squares method revealed various kidulting rationales lead to the invoking of different neutralization techniques. Many researchers have suggested that individuals engage in kidulting for nostalgia purpose. This study showed that while it is the top kidulting rationale, relaxation, the next top rationale, is more impactful in invoking neutralization techniques and leading to kidulting intention. Besides relaxation, ego enhancement rationale and defense of necessity technique also increase kidulting intention. Interestingly, denial of responsibility technique lowers kidulting intention, suggesting individuals may not proceed to kidult while still providing justification for kidulting activities. This study augments the leisure literature by providing insights into the under-examined aspect of how kidulting rationales, neutralization techniques, and kidulting intention are related.

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Wee Kheng Tan received his Ph.D. from National University of Singapore. He is currently an Associate Professor at National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan. His research interests include tourism, and leisure activities, consumer behavior, technology adoption, and electronic commerce. He has published articles in journals such as Behaviour & Information Technology, Computers in Human Behavior, Current Issues in Tourism, Games and Culture, Information Technology & People, Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Journal of Vacation Marketing, Online Information Review, Service Business, Service Industries Journal, and Telematics and Informatics.

Yu-Min Wei is a student at National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan. His research interests include leisure and tourism activities.

Emotion Regulation of Tourists Visiting A Tourist Destination Hit by Natural Disaster (Earthquake)

Wee-Kheng Tan (National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan)

Yu-Min Wei (National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan)

Abstract

Natural disasters often cause considerable damage to tourist destination and make tourists being reluctant to visit the affected destination. Hence, relevant authorities often try to paint a positive picture of the affected destination and provide subsidies to attract tourists to the affected destination. Using the theoretical frameworks of leisure constraint theory (Godbey et al. 2010), travel motivation theory, and emotion regulation theory (Garnefski et al. 2001), this study considers how travel constraints and travel motivations related to the affected destination affect how tourists view that destination from the emotion regulation strategy perspective.

The four positive emotion regulation strategies are: positive reappraisal (e.g. looking at the positive sides such as discovering less-visited areas), positive refocusing (e.g. directing thoughts to other enjoyable aspects of destination), putting into perspective (e.g. thinking the destination is not as badly affected), and acceptance.

This study used the context of Hualien, a popular Taiwan tourist destination. Hualien suffered from a 7.4-magnitude earthquake on April 3, 2024. Popular attractions such as Taroko Gorge and transportation infrastructure were badly damaged, causing a huge drop in tourist arrival. Hence, authorities try to convince reluctant Taiwanese tourists Hualien is not as bad as one imagines and offer financial subsidy.

Data was collected from 90 survey respondents of diversified backgrounds via convenience sampling method.

The path analysis using partial least squares method revealed travel motivations play a more important role than travel constraints in influencing emotion regulation strategies. There are several levers to stimulate tourists' positive reappraisal about Hualien. The authorities can try to stimulate tourists' motivations of scenery, offering subsidy, and looking for thrill. This study demonstrates the usefulness of subsidy as it is able to stimulate positive reappraisal, positive refocusing, and acceptance.

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Yu-Min Wei is a student at National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan. His research interests include leisure and tourism activities.

Female Chefs in UK Professional Kitchens: Exploring Neo-Tribal Networks in a Male-Dominated Industry

Juliane Thieme (University of Greenwich, UK)

Abstract

Despite advances in gender equality, women remain underrepresented in UK professional kitchens, particularly in senior roles within high-end gastronomy (Harris & Giuffre, 2015). Traditional hospitality structures continue to marginalise female chefs, prompting the emergence of alternative support systems beyond institutional hierarchies. This paper explores how female chefs are forming informal professional networks – conceptualised as neo-tribes (Maffesoli, 1996) – to navigate exclusion and build new forms of recognition and solidarity.

While gendered workplace inequalities, also in hospitality as a core part of the broader leisure industry, have been extensively documented (Morgan & Pritchard, 2019), less attention has been paid to how female chefs resist these exclusions by forming their own professional networks. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with current and former female chefs in the UK as well as other qualitative data such as books, blog posts etc., this study investigates how these neo-tribes are grounded in shared values, emotional connection, and mutual support.

Applying neo-tribe theory – traditionally used to analyse consumer cultures (Cova & Cova, 2002) – to the professional realm allows us to see these female-led networks as affective, adaptive responses to a male-dominated workplace. Such formations challenge the hierarchical norms of the kitchen and offer alternative routes for professional growth and visibility. Initiatives such as peer mentorship and online collectives suggest that these neo-tribes not only offer refuge but also actively shape the evolving culture of the hospitality and leisure sector.

This paper offers an early contribution to rethinking workplace dynamics in hospitality through a neo-tribal lens, highlighting how marginalised workers mobilise community, creativity, and resilience within the leisure industry context.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Juliane Thieme is a Senior Lecturer in Events, Tourism & Hospitality at the University of Greenwich. Her research interest is broadly situated within social justice in leisure, from power relations to gendered perspectives; Juliane likes to "ruin leisure" for people telling her how fun it must be to be a tourism, events and hospitality researcher and educator.

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Narratives from Alternative Nightclubs and Venues in Edinburgh – A Rhizome-Informed Analysis of Past and Contemporary Challenges

Ross Tinsley (Edinburgh Napier University, UK)

Abstract

While recent coverage in the media has been spotlighting the death of nightlife (Dunworth, 2024; Harris, 2024), researchers have also been highlighting its importance for mental health and wellbeing Kramer & Wittmann, 2023; (Nofre, 2023), as well as the tensions in recognising and protecting such spaces (Garcia, 2018). This paper seeks to investigate contemporary challenges - such as generational changes in leisure habits, the economy and its impact on youth, and the regulatory environment - but is not just limited to the now, taking a socio-historical approach to explore narratives from key players within both contemporary and historical alternative nightclubs and venues in Edinburgh. This is part of a wider project which draws upon Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) rhizome principals as a lens for interpreting these narratives. Such an approach seeks to draw lines of flight across the spatial and temporal dimensions of Edinburgh's alternative clubs and venues, recognising this as a state of perpetual becoming. This particular paper employs a qualitative methodology taking a culturally orientated approach (Riessman, 2008) to the narratives of both past and current key players. The principal aim of this paper is to investigate the contemporary context of Edinburgh's alternative nightclubs and venues but with a socio-historically informed lens. By including both past and contemporary alternative nightclubs and venues, the research hopes to develop a stronger understanding of what experiences and challenges are typical in the running of such nightclubs and venues, and what are specific to particular social contexts and moments-in-time. In doing so, the research will provide a richer understanding of such alternative nightclubs and venues and their communities.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Ross Tinsley is a lecturer in the Tourism Subject Group at the Business School, Edinburgh Napier University. His research and teaching focuses on destination development through entrepreneurship and cultural consumption. His current work centres on socio-historical narratives on alternative nightclubs and venues, with earlier work on spirituality in festivals and events. His original PhD research focussed on small tourism business networks and destination development. Ross currently serves as Co-chair for the Association of Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE).

Leisure in the Shadow of a Floating Prison: Border(ing) Islands, Vanishing Points, and Vernaculars of Repair in Portland, Dorset

Nicola De Martini Ugolotti (Bournemouth University, UK and Associazione Frantz Fanon, Italy)

Abstract

This paper discusses how men seeking asylum, and local grassroot groups in Portland, Dorset, mobilised leisure spaces and domains in the attempt to negotiate the slow-and-fast violence of bordering spaces and processes in contemporary Britain, materialised by the "Bibby Stockholm" barge docked in Portland Port between June 2023 and January 2025. Building on the co-creation of leisure activities (e.g. running, fishing/walking, music, boxing) by men seeking asylum and local grassroots groups in the Portland area, the paper articulates and contrasts the use of islands-within-islands as "vanishing points" (Gregory, 2007) for people seeking asylum and the right-to-asylum itself with mundane geographies and vernaculars of solidarity. From this perspective, the paper asks what is and can(not) be re-claimed through leisure spaces and domains in the shadow of a floating prison on England's South-West coast, as a relatively isolated site that is nevertheless reflective of and connected to national and international "enforcement archipelagos" (Mountz, 2020). Based on 14 months of ethnographic research in Portland, the paper discusses three domains of contention connected to the "political production of sociality" (Rozakou, 2016, 187) enacted by local groups and men seeking asylum as relating to and juxtaposing: 1) vanishing points and strategic (in)visibilities, 2) affective politics of bordering and solidarity, 3) geographies of enforcement and encounter. By exploring the connections between these three domains of contention, the paper advances some considerations towards (re)conceptualising leisure as repair. That is, leisure as "acts and arts of survival in a shrinking world" (Dokumaci, 2023; De Martini Ugolotti, 2024) that cannot be simply read as claims for citizenship, rights, or "integration" but as social, affective and material practices striving to (re)shape liveable lives even within contexts in which life is debilitated, hurt, diminished.

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Presenter Biography

Nicola De Martini Ugolotti is Senior Lecturer in Sport and Physical Culture at Bournemouth University (UK) and member of Associazione Frantz Fanon (Italy). His research engages with leisure as a lens to understand experiences and negotiations of (forced) migration, overlapping inequalities and uneven social transformation across different materialisations of the urban. Nicola is Associate Editor for the *Leisure Sciences* and *Leisure Studies* journals and member of the Editorial Board of the *Sociology of Sport* journal. His monograph "*Music, Forced Migration and Emplacement: Sounds of Asylum Bristol*" was published with Palgrave MacMillan in 2024.

Reflections on Competency Based Assessment and Skills Development for the Leisure Industry

Susie Walsh (York St John University, UK)

Alan Johnston (York St John University, UK)

Ruby Mathew (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

Contemporary higher education programmes, particularly those within vocational and professional sectors are encouraged to both develop academic knowledge alongside skills and abilities fit for the workplace (Ion et al, 2016), and often associated with experiential learning (Cock, 2024). While there is a need to develop skills ready for the workplace, there is also a need to assess said skills to a level of competency, which will allow individuals to assess and judge capability, whether from an employee or employer standpoint (Salazar-Salas, 2002). The purpose of the research is therefore to discover the post-graduation value of undertaking competency-based assessment (CBA) and whether, on reflection, the process provided appropriate levels of work preparedness for a career in the leisure industry. Cock (2024) highlights the need of students to reflect on their taught learning and its relevance in the workplace. Research was conducted following a phenomenological study to identify the lived experiences of six graduates, now employed within the leisure industry. Convenience sampling was adopted as a means of recruiting graduates who had completed the same module (which utilised competency-based assessment), at the same university and who had since moved into roles within the leisure sector. Semi-structured questions are used to draw out key learning points from their experiences. The ensuing data was analysed using manual coding and thematic analysis, prior to making use of NVivo 12 to further analyse the information received. There is little research evidence of the impact of CBA once graduates enter employment, and this paper seeks to reflect on the appreciation of the skills gained during development.

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Presenter Biographies

Susie Walsh is a lecturer in Leadership and Human Resource Management at York St John University. They are currently involved with degree apprenticeship delivery, focusing on bridging the gap between academic learning and industry practice. Additionally, they teach modules on undergraduate courses in Sports Management, Events, and Tourism, with a particular interest in leadership, management and innovation within these sectors. Their research interest is varied and includes exploring the value of authentic and experiential assessments in teaching pedagogy, ensuring students acquire practical, real-world skills.

Dr Alan Johnston has a DBA from the University of Huddersfield. He is a Senior Lecturer in Management and Organisational Development at York Business School. He has over 25 years of experience teaching and managing within the Higher and Further Education Sectors. He has held strategic and operational responsibility for large teams of staff and substantial budgets and is experienced in performance management, recruitment and selection, and operational planning. His research interest focuses on the management of people, and their behaviours within organisations. He currently Co-Chairs the People in Employment Settings (PiES) Research Group within York St John University.

Dr Ruby Christine Mathew is a Lecturer in Business Management at York St. John University. She holds a Doctorate in Management from the University of York, specializing in gender and organizational culture. Her research explores gender dynamics, marginalized groups, and neurodivergent communities within organizational contexts, focusing on the impact of policies, equality accreditations, and social justice initiatives on employee experiences. Dr Mathew is also passionate about sustainability and has collaborated with the University of York on low-carbon strategies for local enterprises. Her work aims to promote inclusive, equitable, and sustainable practices within organizations.

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Special Olympics and Serious Leisure

Trudie Walters (Lincoln University, Aotearoa New Zealand)

Abstract

Those who engage in serious leisure activities (such as sports) gain a sense of achievement, an increase in self-esteem, stress reduction, skill acquisition, and an enhanced level of self-confidence. They also deepen their social relationships, form friendships, expand their social networks and have an enhanced social life. In addition, serious leisure participants are engaged in a 'social world' that has its own actors, organisations and practices (Unruh, 1979). Using social worlds as a research lens can enable us to understand the mechanisms that deliver benefits for subjective wellbeing. To date, social world theory has not been applied within the context of intellectually disabled people's leisure experiences.

Disabled people have been overlooked by leisure and event studies researchers in the past, but there is now an emerging body of work investigating their experiences. Music events (Bossey, 2020, 2024; Dinis et al., 2020; Alvarado, 2022), sporting events (dos Santos Neto et al., 2019; McGillivray et al., 2019), rural events (Sage & Flores, 2019) and arts events (Walters, 2023) have all featured. However, it is predominantly the voices of people with physical disabilities who have been heard in these studies: the experiences of people with intellectual disabilities, who are frequently subject to societal narratives of 'no vision, no future, no contribution, a burden on others' (Mullen & Wills, 2016, p. 6), have largely been neglected.

This UK-based project addresses these gaps in our understanding, adopting social world theory as the lens through which to investigate the importance of sport as serious leisure for intellectually disabled people. Specifically, this qualitative project seeks to answer the research question, "How does participation in the social world of Special Olympics contribute to quality of life for athletes with intellectual disabilities and their wider networks?" Preliminary findings from the analysis of semi-structured interviews will be presented.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Trudie Walters is a Senior Lecturer at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki/Lincoln University in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research platform is centred on events and leisure as interdisciplinary lenses through which to understand the inner workings and values of society. Her work is firmly positioned within a social science framework, while clearly linking into the applied reality of events and leisure as social phenomena, areas of academic research, global industries, and practices. Trudie is a Board member and past President of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies, and serves on the Editorial Board of a number of top academic leisure and events journals.

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Indigenous Leisure Events in Times of Turmoil: Resistance and Resilience

Trudie Walters (Lincoln University, Aotearoa New Zealand)
Diane Ruwhiu (Otago University, Aotearoa New Zealand)

Abstract

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Matariki is a special time in the Māori world. The rising of the Matariki constellation (also known as Pleiades) is a time for remembering the dead, celebrating the present, and preparing the ground for the coming year. While its observation had all but ceased by 1940, it has experienced a resurgence since the 1990s (Whaanga et al., 2020).

In 2020, the Labour party promised to make Matariki a public holiday if they were elected to government. As the only public holiday recognising the country's Indigenous culture, this was highly significant. It was opposed by the opposition parties, some who made comments that showed "contempt for Māori culture" (RNZ, 2022). The bill passed and the first Matariki holiday was observed in June 2022 with communities around the country holding events, generating increased positive media coverage. In 2023, the opposition parties were elected to power, immediately announcing plans to repeal or review policies designed to improve outcomes for Māori (Duff, 2022). This generated a backlash amongst Māori (and many non-Māori).

This qualitative study critically examines media accounts of leisure events celebrating Matariki over the period 2020-2024. We explore how, in this time of turmoil and increased hostility towards 'things Māori', media narratives frame events as sites of resistance and resilience. To foreground Māori voice in the findings, we use an Indigenous analytic framework drawing on four Māori principles: Te Ao Māori (the Māori world); tino rangatiratanga (self-determination, governance and autonomy); whanaungatanga (relationships and connection) and te reo (Māori language).

We find that the Aotearoa NZ media have begun to connect the issues facing contemporary Māori with colonisation, and make them more visible. We conclude they are beginning to portray a more accurate 'reality' of the contemporary Māori lifeworld, using Matariki as a lens.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Trudie Walters is a Senior Lecturer at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki/Lincoln University in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research platform is centred on events and leisure as interdisciplinary lenses through which to understand the inner workings and values of society. Her work is firmly positioned within a social science framework, while clearly linking into the applied reality of events and leisure as social phenomena, areas of academic research, global industries, and practices. Trudie is a Board member and past President of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies, and serves on the Editorial Board of a number of top academic leisure and events journals.

Dr Diane Ruwhiu is a Professor in the Department of Management, and Dean of the Graduate Research School at the Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka/University of Otago, Ōtepoti/Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand. She is a Māori researcher of Ngāpuhi tribal affiliation whose research examines the multiple modes of Māori economy and the many distinctive forms of organization that emerge therein. Further areas of research include Indigeneity within the context of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and indigenous methodologies.

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Hikers' Climate Change Risk Perception and Prevention Behaviours: The Case of Taiwan

Wei-Ching Wang (Shih-Hsin University, Taiwan)

Abstract

Extreme and unstable weather conditions caused by climate change significantly impact outdoor recreational activities that rely on natural resources (Matzarakis et al., 2012; Mendelsohn & Markowski, 1999). Hiking, as one of the most popular outdoor activities, is particularly vulnerable to these impacts. Studies have highlighted risks such as landslides, heavy rainfall, and heat waves that can disrupt hiking experiences and pose threats to safety (Hand et al., 2018; KC et al., 2021; Mourey et al., 2020). In Taiwan, hiking is the most common and favoured recreational activity, with over 70% of the population participating. However, accidents in mountainous areas have risen significantly in recent years, underscoring the growing risks associated with climate change.

This study examines hikers' perceptions of climate change risks, their risk evaluations, and the preventive behaviours they adopt in response to these risks. Data were collected via an online survey targeting hikers in Taiwan, yielding 517 valid responses. The findings indicate that hikers in Taiwan generally perceive medium to high levels of climate change risk, particularly in relation to changing weather patterns, access issues, and health risks. Respondents also recognize the severity and vulnerability associated with climate change and express a willingness to take preventive actions to address these risks.

Notably, male hikers, experienced hikers, and those with higher education levels demonstrated greater self-efficacy, response efficacy, positive attitudes toward preventive behaviours, perceived behavioural control, and engagement in preventive actions. These findings suggest that hikers are more likely to take preventive measures when they believe a recommended action is effective in mitigating risks and feel confident in their ability to perform it. Additionally, experienced hikers, particularly those involved in high-altitude mountaineering, exhibited heightened awareness of climate change risks and a stronger inclination to adopt preventive behaviours.

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Presenter Biography

Wei-Ching Wang is an associate professor in Tourism Department, Shih-Hsin University, Taipei, Taiwan. Her research interests include outdoor recreation management, leisure behaviour and nature-based tourism. Currently she focuses her research area mainly on climate change impact on outdoor recreation and tourism.

Gender Inequalities in Sport – Exploring the Experiences of Women Coaches

Urszula Wolski (Buckinghamshire New University, UK)

Abstract

Despite a continued growth for women in many sports, including those traditionally seen as rooted in the male domain (Lake, 2012), sports remain gendered and stereotypical, and even more so when looking at coaching in sport. In this gendered division in sport, coaching opportunities remain limited in women's sports and are mostly absent in men's sports (Walker and Bopp, 2011). Coaches are still vastly under-represented, and the coaching profession remains a white male-dominated occupation in which women are marginalised, bullied, harassed, and excluded (Norman and Rankin-Wright, 2018). According to Norman (2022), a third of coaches are female and the gender disparity becomes greater as the coaching pathway narrows. It can be argued, therefore, that roles continue to be reinforced in accordance with Connell's (1987, 1995) concepts of 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'emphasised femininity'.

However, as shown in previous research and current research (Wolski, 2019 – 2025), this is a slow but changing landscape. Previous research which looked at the experiences of women tennis coaches in the UK, found that some coaches continue to experience sexism, and discrimination, within their professions. Key themes identified were stereotyping, the lack of role models and feeling excluded from the 'Boys' Club'. Current research builds on this and has broadened to explore the experiences of women coaches in other sports in different countries.

Research comprised a mixed methods approach consisting of a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Key findings from current research will be presented at the conference, which reveal similar themes to prior research, but that this differs depending on which sport.

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Presenter Biography

Urszula Wolski's research interests include new technologies for social research, qualitative research methods and software, the Sociology of Sport, the Sociology of Religion and Positive Psychology. Current research is looking at gender inequalities within sports coaching; character strengths and participation in sport/physical activity to promote positive ageing; and the beliefs and experiences of paranormal investigators. Previous research within the field of Positive Psychology looked at the integration of character strengths and mindfulness for achieving flow in tennis performance.

Paranormal Investigation – A Serious Leisure Pursuit

Urszula Wolski (Buckinghamshire New University, UK)

Abstract

Paranormal phenomena are very much a part of society, which is evident by the number of studies and research that has been conducted over the years across different disciplines, but predominantly within psychology and parapsychology. Very little has been carried out from a sociological perspective, for as stated by Castro, Burrows and Woofitt (2013), paranormal experiences are not something that sociologists concern themselves with, and if they do, the focus tends to be on social and cultural factors (Irwin, 2009).

Moreover, there is little empirical research that exists that looks at the researchers themselves and their own experiences and beliefs whilst carrying out their investigations. Some researchers may write about their experiences as part of their investigations, but this is a largely reflexive account, rather than based on empirical research.

From a social world theory perspective, the aim of research was to explore in-depth the community of paranormal investigators, those actively investigating over a set period, who devote much time to investigating the paranormal, and thus engaging in a serious leisure pursuit (Sachsman and Stebbins, 2017).

Using a mixed methods approach, comprising of a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the aim of research was to:

- Explore the experiences and beliefs of investigators of paranormal phenomena
- Identify their reasons for investigating paranormal phenomena
- What they make of such experiences
- Provide a 'voice' to those interested and who experience such phenomena

Key findings from the research will be presented at the conference.

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Urszula Wolski's research interests include new technologies for social research, qualitative research methods and software, the Sociology of Sport, the Sociology of Religion and Positive Psychology. Current research is looking at gender inequalities within sports coaching; character strengths and participation in sport/physical activity to promote positive ageing; and the beliefs and experiences of paranormal investigators. Previous research within the field of Positive Psychology looked at the integration of character strengths and mindfulness for achieving flow in tennis performance.

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"I'm Learning How to Love Myself": Indigenous Programming in Women's Prison

Felice Yuen (Concordia University, Canada)
Brittany Butler (Nova Scotia Health, Canada)

Abstract

Acknowledgement of the devastating impacts of colonization on Indigenous populations requires reflection and action from scholars and service-providers. The proposed presentation reinforces the need for culturally meaningful leisure experiences and emphasizes considerations for creating such spaces within a colonial structure (i.e., prison), whose policies and practices are used to disenfranchise and disconnect Indigenous people from one another and from their ancestral lands. The presentation focuses on a project that aimed to understand the role of cultural programming on incarcerated Indigenous women's healing and rehabilitation. The study, grounded in decolonizing methodologies and relational ethics (i.e., a process embedded in ceremony, reciprocity, flexibility, and readiness to respond), examined Indigenous (i.e., First Nations, Metis, Inuit) women who voluntarily participated in cultural programs offered in a Canadian prison.

Data were collected through 1) talking circles, where data were collected using an arts-based note-taking process called *Sketchnotes* (Rohde, 2013), and 2) one-to-one semi-structured interviews, where interviews were audio-recorded. Thirty-eight Indigenous women participated in the project. The following themes were identified through data analysis: 1) Finding safety; 2) Emotional Connection; 3) Ancestral clarity; and 4) Renewal and resilience.

The discussion highlights participants' experiences as a counternarrative to colonial practices of the prison. While such experiences are not panacea, they offer moments of healing. Prisons are considered a mechanism of colonization, where adherence to the dominant Eurocentric prison system (e.g., focus on psychological and behavioural change) results in a lack of culturally specific resources (e.g., traditional medicines), access to nature, Elders, traditional practices, cultural foods, and cultural training for prison staff (Pedlar et al. 2018). Recommendations to support the creation of safe and culturally meaningful spaces within a colonized system emphasize the importance of community collaborations, the integration of local Indigenous knowledges, and limitations of compartmentalizing culture (i.e., providing access to culture in weekly 1-hour time slots).

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Presenter Biographies

Felice Yuen is a Full Professor in the Department of Applied Human Sciences, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. She has been exploring experiences and meanings of healing with Indigenous women for the past two decades. Leisure as context for healing, social justice, and social transformation are at the heart of her research. She employs arts-based approaches in her research (e.g., body mapping, photographs, collage, poetry). Indigenous methodologies and participatory action research guide the critical approach she brings to her work.

Brittany Butler (formerly Weisgarber) is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist with Nova Scotia Health. In addition to her clinical role, her research interests include healing practices, recidivism, and community reintegration for justice involved persons. Her connection to this work stems from experience and relationships with justice involved family members.

Mobility Inequalities in Leisure Travel: The Quest for Hogwarts[1] as a Muggle-Born

Samira Zare (University of Lincoln, UK)
Isabella Ye (University of Greenwich, UK)

Abstract

I stand in the immigration line at an international border, passport clutched tightly in my hand. I glance at its cover, no longer emblazoned with the emblem of my nationality, but instead wrapped in a Hogwarts passport cover, the insignia of a world I aspire to enter. In the stratified realm of global mobility, Hogwarts ranks far above my nationality. As a "Muggle-born" traveller- akin to a wizard born to non-magical parents- this is more than a metaphor; it is a stark reality of exclusion. My passport grants limited mobility, requiring extensive visa applications, border interrogations, and a persistent performance of submission. Meanwhile, "full-blood" travellers—holders of high-ranking passports—glide effortlessly through e-gates, unburdened by the scrutiny I endure.

The systemic stratification of global mobility as a requirement for tourism remains underexamined (Anderson, 2013). While much scholarship explores borders in political and migration contexts (Adey, 2017; Cresswell, 2006; Sheller, 2018), tourism studies have largely overlooked mobility's structural inequalities (McCabe & Diekmann, 2015; Stoffelen, 2022). This study employs the Hogwarts metaphor to interrogate how passports function as stratified markers of privilege, intersecting with race, gender, and religion to shape exclusionary mobility experiences (Stephenson, 2006). These issues are deeply intertwined with leisure studies, as access to tourism and leisure is shaped by systemic inequalities governing global mobility (Spracklen, 2011).

Using narrative inquiry (Creswell, 2013) and critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2014), this study foregrounds the experiences of underprivileged travellers, highlighting burdensome visa processes, differential treatment, and security-based justifications for exclusion (Bianchi et al., 2020; Torabian & Mair, 2022). These travellers internalise marginalisation, navigating a system that perpetuates othering.

This paper calls for a critical reimagining of leisure travel to challenge mobility inequalities (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006), envisioning a world where Muggle-born travellers can board the train to Hogwarts without fear of exclusion or discrimination.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Samira Zare is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Advertising at Lincoln International Business School in the United Kingdom. Her research interests include social and sustainability marketing, mobility inequality and injustices in tourism and academia, particularly travellers' border-crossing experiences.

Isabella Ye (University of Greenwich, UK)

Inequalities of Access to Key Spaces: Where Are Global South Scholars at International Academic Conferences?

Samira Zare (University of Lincoln, UK)

Sarah Wijesinghe (Sunway University of Malaysia, Malaysia)

Abstract

"Loss, shame, anxiety, fear, despair, and doubt"—these emotions capture the lived experiences of Global South scholars navigating access to international leisure-related conferences. This study explores how geopolitics, visa dynamics, and systemic barriers restrict academic mobility, creating spaces of exclusion in conferences and, consequently, in knowledge production. While scholars from the Global North enjoy relative ease of international travel, their Global South counterparts face significant emotional, financial, and bureaucratic labour, raising critical questions about representation and power in academic spaces.

In today's academic reality, intensified neoliberalism and competition govern the landscape (Labri & Ashraf, 2019; Shen, Xu, & Wang, 2022). Internationalisation has become a key term in higher education, with academic mobility seen as a proxy for excellence and competitiveness (Cohen et al., 2020). As universities race toward global rankings, academics are expected to network and collaborate internationally to advance their careers (Henderson, 2021). Conferences, especially those held in the geopolitical West, are essential for networking and career progression, acting as "extra-institutional spaces" for collaboration (Urry, 2012).

However, international conferences are not neutral sites but world-making spaces where knowledge, relationships, and power are constructed and contested (Mählck, 2016). These spaces mirror global power dynamics, reinforcing colonial and neo-colonial inequalities. Dominant actors, primarily scholars from the Global North, shape conference norms and frameworks, marginalising the voices of the Global South. This study critically examines how nationality, passport, and geopolitics intersect to marginalise Global South scholars in these spaces. Drawing on qualitative interviews, it highlights the systemic barriers- visa policies, financial burdens, and bureaucratic hurdles- that disproportionately affect marginalized scholars.

This paper contributes to the debate on equity in higher education, urging a reimagining of international conferences as truly inclusive spaces that reflect global academic diversity

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Presenter Biographies:

Dr Samira Zare is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Advertising at Lincoln International Business School in the United Kingdom. Her research interests include social and sustainability marketing, mobility inequality and injustices in tourism and academia, particularly travellers' border-crossing experiences.

Dr Sarah N.R. Wijesinghe is a senior lecturer at the Jeffrey Sachs Centre on Sustainable Development, Sunway University, Malaysia. Her work as an interdisciplinary critical researcher explores the intersections of gender, tourism, critical sustainability, education, colonialism, and decolonisation.

An Investigation on Employees' Perspectives in Supporting Inclusion and Diversity among Neurodivergent Individuals: A Study on North Yorkshire Service Industry

Hongrui Zhu (York St John University, UK)

Ruby Christine Mathew (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

Academia and practitioners within the tourism and hospitality industry have widely recognised the necessity to make the travel services and experiences more accessible and inclusive for individuals with physical and sensory conditions (Darcy et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2024). Although a small number of scholars have started looking into individuals and families with diverse neurological conditions in tourism and hospitality (Gudi et al., 2022; Hutson & Hutson, 2022, 2023; Jepson et al., 2024), limited research has been undertaken to investigate if the employees who work in the industry are able to attend to the specific needs of this cohort, which left an under-researched gap in the literature. To better understand the concept, Jepson et al. (2024) pointed out that neurodiversity encompasses neurotypical and neurodivergent individuals, which embraces different ways of how people interact with the environment (Baumer & Frueh, 2021). Neurodivergent individuals (such as those with ASD and/or ADHD) have different needs and expectations as compared to the neurotypical counterparts (Joo et al., 2024).

This paper examines the awareness and preparedness of employees in tourism, hospitality, and leisure organisations in North Yorkshire to deliver positive services and create meaningful experiences for neurodivergent individuals and their families. Using semi-structured interviews, it investigates industry practitioners' understanding of neurodiversity, evaluates existing policies to accommodate specific needs, and identifies challenges and barriers to accessibility and inclusivity. Grounded in the interpretive paradigm, which prioritises understanding subjective meanings and lived experiences within social contexts (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), the study focuses on the perceptions of employees and managers. This qualitative approach enables a nuanced exploration of organisational practices and challenges (Braun & Clarke, 2013), contributing to broader discussions on equitable service provision and offering insights to inform training and policy development within the sector.

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Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

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1841

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YORK
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UNIVERSITY

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Presenter Biographies

Hongrui Zhu, Ph.D. is a Lecturer and Course Lead of International Tourism and Hospitality Management at York Business School, York St John University. He has a broad interest in tourism, hospitality and leisure with focus on incorporating technology and inclusivity into tourism and leisure. He has a track record of publications in international conferences and journals in these areas.

Ruby Christine Mathew, Ph.D. is a Lecturer and Course Lead of MSc Human Resource Management at York Business School, York St John University. Her research focuses on gender dynamics within organisational contexts, examining the impact of policies, equality accreditations, and social justice initiatives on employee experiences. Passionate about sustainability, she has collaborated on low-carbon strategies for local enterprises and aims to promote inclusive, equitable, and sustainable practices within organisations.

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Researching the Leisure We Practice: Unpacking and Understanding Embodied Ethnographic Methods

Reid Allen (University of London, UK)
Tom Critchley (University of London, UK)

Abstract

We believe there is a special relationship between research methods and leisure. Since the last. *Leisure Studies* special issue on methodologies (Watson 2010), new ethnographic approaches have been coined reflecting wider epistemological trends. Situated, inventive and embodied studies characterise researchers possessing affective and enchanted relationships with their leisure practice. Drawing on the examples of rolling ethnography (McDuie-Ra 2021a, 2021b) and wet ethnography (Evers 2019), we ask: *what kind of knowledges do these methods afford?* In this workshop, we will first introduce ethnographic methods in leisure, framed around our own research practice: skateboarding in post-colonial contexts and urban, unauthorised swimming. These methodologies will be unpacked, destabilised and problematised in order to thematically order the benefits, shortcomings and ethical dilemmas of ethnographic research on leisure. Participants will then be invited to engage and reflect on their own methodological practice through these themes towards a collective unpacking of ethnographic approaches in leisure studies. We will collate, organise and follow-up contributions from participants into an accessible zine as a point-of-reference and material outcome of the workshop to develop further beyond LSA2025.

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Presenter Biographies

Reid Allen is a doctorate student in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at City St Georges, University of London. His research investigates the practice of unauthorised 'wild' swimming in London, using situated ethnographic methods to consider the experiences of those who swim unauthorised in the city and what they tell us about the intersection between polluted leisure, urban public space and social control.

Tom Critchley is a doctorate student and Associate Lecturer in The Design Department at Goldsmiths, University London. He also holds an MSc in Security Studies from University College London. His research utilises skateboarding as a vehicle to explore transnational philanthropic work at The Freedom Skatepark in Jamaica and 7Hills Skatepark in Jordan. More broadly, he is interested in leisure as activism, resistance and towards more-just worlds. Tom is also a Student Representative for LSA.

Navigating Muslimhood in Recreational and Sport Spaces

Shemine Gulamhusein (University of Victoria, Canada)

Abstract

Navigating Muslimhood is a project that unpacks the health inequities within the Muslim Canadian community via a recreational lens. Much of leisure research within a Muslim context is focused on tourism to Islamic contexts for pilgrimages (Yousaf, 2023). Less is known about Muslim recreational practices – the 'freely' chosen activities community members partake in. Even less is known about the intersection of migration and recreation. Scholars such as Feagin (1991), Kloek, Peters and Sijtsma (2013), and many more have and continue to document acts of racism and discrimination during recreational activities. As can be seen, experiences of racism and discrimination have been longstanding concerns which do not seem to be subsiding. This project digs deeper. Muslim Canadians, along with other immigrants, constantly push boundaries, navigate complex spaces, and are often forced out of their freely chosen recreational pursuits. If done well, connectedness can be achieved through recreation (Shields, Drolet & Valenzuela, 2016), yet community members share how this rarely happens within the Canadian recreational context. The project challenges the belief that recreation is associated with belonging, acceptance, and health promotion.

During this workshop, participants will be introduced to the collaborative poems and artwork developed by Muslim Canadians. These pieces speak to their lived experience within recreational and sport spaces, how they define recreation, the barriers they experience, and how recreation can be a tool for navigating their identities. Additional art created by recreation and sport leadership across Canada that responds to the voices of Muslim Canadians will also be shared. Ideally, workshop participants will engage with the art, poetry, and their own lived experiences, contributing their thoughts, expertise, and art to the growing project. *Navigating Muslimhood* aims to bring together multiple voices to advocate for advanced practices of inclusion and belonging for all bodies in recreational and sport spaces.

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Presenter Biography

Dr Shemine Alnoor Gulamhusein is a Muslim scholar occupying the lands of the WSÁNEĆ peoples. She has a deep-seated commitment to creative, innovative, and interdisciplinary understandings, the dismantling of, and re-creating accessible, culturally grounded, and transformative research. Her research centres on migrant subjectivities, diasporic self-making, and theorizing in-between spaces.

Navigating Challenges with a Post-Critical Lens: Educating in the "Leisure Space"

Mary G. Parr (Kent State University, USA)
Heather Gibson (University of Florida, USA)

Abstract

Documentation of the struggles of higher education in general, and leisure studies degree programs more specifically, have been ongoing for decades (e.g., Elkington, 2012; Talmage, et.al, 2018). More recent developments, particularly in the U.S., have many questioning the return on investment of any college degree, let alone a "leisure" degree. In addition, a "war on DEI/EDI" is being waged to protect conservative voices on campus. Long-standing debates about the relation between a conceptual foundation of leisure and technical skills required to deliver services exacerbate the difficult position of leisure degree. We propose a way of navigating these challenges, applying a post-critical perspective that seeks to defend "… education as the study of, or initiation into, a subject matter for its intrinsic, educational, rather than instrumental, value, so that this can be taken up anew by the new generation" (p. Hogsdon, et. al, 2017). Many post-critical scholars in education liken this educational space to the Ancient Greek *schole*. For leisure scholars, we know this space as a "leisure" space. Elkington (2012), described the task of education as an ontological one "*… enabling individuals to prosper amid uncertainty in situations in which there are no stable descriptions, no concepts to be grasped with any assuredness and no value system that holds sway over any other.*" Given that the only certainty in a future world is uncertainty, Vlieghe et. al (2019) posed three options: 1) teach what we know, holding fast to established theories and methods but risk indoctrination rather than education; 2) leave our students to their own devices to educate themselves in ways and topics they see fit; or 3) share with students something we see as intrinsically good, offering a new generation the opportunity to experience a world and then start anew. In this workshop we outline current challenges and explore the post-critical perspective, connecting it with Elkington's "seeing degrees of leisure." Breakout groups will work through examples of educating in the "leisure space" and we'll end with a discussion summarizing concrete ways to apply the post critical perspective in order to navigate these challenges.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Mary Parr is a Professor of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management at Kent State University. Research interests include understanding the meaning of leisure, particularly from a critical lens, and its relation to professional practice and the professional preparation of students.

Dr Heather J. Gibson is a Professor and Undergraduate Coordinator in the Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management at the University of Florida. Her research interests include leisure, tourism and sport behavior in mid and later life and the wellbeing associated with participation, women as tourists, sport tourism (specializing in sport events and active sport tourism), and perceived risk in tourism. She teaches classes in tourism theory, sport tourism, leisure theory, and introductory tourism.

The Role of Game-Based Research in Enabling Community Engagement within a Socio-Environmental Context

Kostas Stavrianakis (Robert Gordon University, UK)
Jacob Nielsen (Robert Gordon University, UK)

Abstract

This proposed workshop aims to provide researchers with the skills to implement conversation game methods within a socio-environmental context. We bring in a social psychology and leisure lens to the methods as this is a game-based approach allowing participants to learn and make decisions about a topic by meaningful interactions with their peers (De Vreede et al., 2014). This workshop will enable participants to design conversation games that can be integrated into their research and engagement practices. Furthermore, the workshop will provide the participants with hands-on experiences in how to conduct a conversation game. The workshop will highlight how conversation games are an inclusive and empowering way to introduce research participants to complex issues they are not familiar with and gather the participants' perspectives on those issues (Macdonald et al., 2019; Ward et al., 2019). Furthermore, we will discuss how the conversation game can be co-created and be part of a bigger portfolio of research and engagement activities. We will also have an opportunity to discuss how group dynamics can influence group decisions (Völker & Lienhoop, 2016). To illustrate this process, we draw on our experience of developing and using the PlayDecide conversation game in the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark and Greece in order to explore the societal dimensions of a EU Horizon 2020 pilot project that sought to develop new Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage technologies. We highlight the challenges and potentials of using conversation games to engage communities in projects where climate technologies and the socio-environmental futures they bring are still being explored and contested.

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Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

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Presenter Biographies

Kostas Stavrianakis is an Environmental Social scientist with an interdisciplinary academic background. Through his research he aims to further understand how our social contexts influence our environmental behaviours and beliefs around climate change. His current research focuses on public acceptance of decarbonisation technologies, and more specifically Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage technologies. His current research is funded by the European Union through the Horizon2020 Research and Innovation programme. He is a big advocate of parks and green spaces for their role in peoples' wellbeing and environmental behaviours. In the past he has conducted research on leisure, environmental behaviours and local parks.

Jacob Nielsen's research examines how people and communities respond to and are impacted by policies and market initiatives that seek to address globally interconnected challenges. In his PhD, he used ethnographic methods to explore what impact modern slavery and labour exploitation policies had on precarious workers and how the workers themselves creatively sought to carve out more hopeful futures. In his current position as a research fellow for ConsenCUS a H2020 project on Carbon Capture technologies, he explores these issues in relation to how climate policies and technological innovations play out within local communities. He is also concerned with what role more collaborative, diverse, and non-hierarchical ways of organising could have in addressing climate change, inequality and other global challenges.

Leveraging GenAI Tools for Inclusive Learning Experiences

Susan Purrington (Northern Arizona University, USA)

Abstract

Building upon Bowen and Watson's (2024) framework for AI-integrated pedagogy and successful implementation of the "AI and the Future of Fun" course at Northern Arizona University, this workshop demonstrates how educators can leverage generative AI tools to develop more inclusive learning materials. Incorporating Buolamwini's (2023) principles for ethical AI implementation and Mollick's (2024) insights on human-AI collaboration, participants will explore practical applications that support diverse learning needs while maintaining academic integrity.

The workshop opens with a concise introduction to inclusive teaching principles aligned with Universal Design for Learning (CAST.org) and AI-U/1.0 guidelines (Elon University & AAC&U, 2024), followed by a demonstration of effective prompting techniques based on Laist's (2024) pedagogical framework. This foundation prepares participants for hands-on exploration with their chosen GenAI tool.

During the practice portion, participants will work in pairs to generate inclusive learning materials, applying Clark and Tolbert's (2023) authentic learning principles, Winkelmes' (2009) transparent methods, and Stommel's (2023) ungrading approach. Activities include creating multi-level transparent assignment instructions, developing flexible assessment options with examples, and crafting reflection prompts that accommodate diverse learning styles. Through guided practice and group sharing, participants will refine their prompting techniques while considering ethical implications and potential biases.

The session concludes with a focused discussion on implementation strategies, addressing critical considerations about AI bias, academic integrity, and equitable student access to technology. Participants will leave with a collection of prompts, student evaluation guidelines for AI-generated content, and resources for continued exploration.

This workshop is designed for educators interested in AI-enhanced inclusive teaching. No prior AI experience is required. Participants should bring a laptop or tablet and have access to a free LLM (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Co-Pilot) account. Through practical application and collaborative learning, educators will gain concrete tools for creating more inclusive learning environments that meet the diverse needs of their students

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Presenter Biography

Dr Susan Purrington is an Associate Teaching Professor at Northern Arizona University with expertise in recreation therapy and digital leisure. A self-proclaimed inclusive innovation specialist, she has pioneered innovative approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in AI integration and universal design for learning. She develops cutting-edge courses like "AI and the Future of Fun" while advocating for inclusive course design. Her research focuses on generative AI, inclusive customer experiences, and professional fieldwork. Dr Purrington is the founder of welcomed here, Inc. and holds multiple certifications in inclusive teaching practices, including recent credentials in AI-enhanced education from ACUE and EDUCAUSE.

Visual Methods in/as Leisure Research

Louise Todd (Edinburgh Napier University, UK)

Brett Lashua (University College London, UK)

Brianna Wyatt (Oxford Brookes University, UK)

Rasul Mowatt (North Carolina State University, USA)

Corey Johnson (North Carolina State University, USA)

Beccy Watson (Leeds Beckett University, UK)

Abstract

This panel will consider the (re)centralisation of visual methods in leisure research. It emerges from a research group, Visual Methods and Ethnography in Interdisciplinary Research, a seminar series and symposium (Edinburgh Napier University, 2019-2022), and a forthcoming Special Issue of *World Leisure Journal* (2025) focused on this theme. Visual methods offer creative, critical and immersive approaches to leisure research. Johnson (2014) defined visual methods primarily as the use of "images, video or artwork to trigger discussion and guide a qualitative interview between researcher and participant" (p. 318). Approaches may include photo-elicitation, photovoice, visitor-generated photographs of parks and natural areas, or collaborative work with marginalised or disadvantaged groups (Klitzing, 2004; Todd, 2022) in which there is a rich legacy within leisure research. While visual methods are established in social science research (Pink, 2007; Rose, 2022), and used in tourism studies (Rakić & Chambers, 2011), emphasis remains upon photography, largely ignoring the vast array of other ocular approaches (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Digital visual methods using new media have emerged (Volo & Irimias, 2021), including using smartphones as integrated visual data devices. Other advances such as TikTok, Instagram, AI-generated images and AI-assisted analysis of images (Wang, Luo, & Huang, 2020) open further avenues to question the primacy of "the visual" in everyday leisure. Alternately, not all new visual research prioritises digitality. The use of "residual" visual media (Williams, 1977) invites attention to continuing practices such as film photography, print media, and artwork (e.g., paintings). The range of visual approaches as ways to rethink and reimagine fieldwork and data collection, as well as generate visual 'outputs' and share knowledge, are vast and exciting areas for exploration. Visual approaches raise important questions of research philosophies, strategies and methods. Accordingly, we propose a panel that challenges researchers to think critically or differently about visual methods in/as leisure research.

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Presenter Biographies

Louise Todd is an Associate Professor and interim Head of the Tourism and Intercultural Business Communications Subject at Edinburgh Napier University. She leads the Visual Methods and Ethnography Research Group and is Deputy Lead of the Tourism Research Centre (TRC). Louise also leads on Public Engagement for ENU's Business School. Louise's research interests are in arts, cultural tourism and public engagement. She is concerned with visual culture, creative and visual methods alongside the potential of festivals and tourism to engage with community stakeholders. Louise is a practicing visual artist. She has published her research and exhibited her artwork internationally.

Brett Lashua teaches sociology of media at the Institute of Education, University College London. He has worked with schools, community centers, musicians and arts organizations in the USA, Canada, and the UK to address questions of leisure and youth media, racialized borderlands, and urban spaces. His research is underscored by creative and collaborative methods including participatory music-making, cultural mapping, documentary filmmaking, and digital storytelling, as well as archival approaches. His most recent co-edited book is *Popular Music in Leeds: Histories, Heritage, People and Places* (Intellect, 2023).

Corey W. Johnson is the Karla A. Henderson Distinguished Professor in Park, Recreation, and Tourism Management at North Carolina State University. His inquiry focuses on power relations between the dominant and non-dominant groups in leisure, and he is also a qualitative research methodologist for social justice. His projects include the decrease of gender-based violence online, critique of privileged identities and digital systems, and how people use apps for developing more-than-romantic-intimate-sexual relations. He has received the Distinguished Researcher Award from The Academy of Leisure Sciences and the MLK Jr. Achieving the Dream Award.

Rasul A. Mowatt is a Department Head in the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University with four areas of focus: geographies of Race; geographies of violence; production of public space; and, critical theory. Relevant work, "A People's History of Leisure Studies: Old Knowledge, New Knowledge and *The Philadelphia Negro* as a Foundational Text" with Myron Floyd and Kevin Hylton appeared in the first volume, first issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure.* Three additional key texts are: *The Geographies of Threat* (2021); *Laundering Black Rage* (2024); and *The City of Hip-Hop* (2025).

Leisure Studies Association
Annual Conference 2025

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Beccy Watson is Reader in the Carnegie School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University, and an active researcher within the Centre for Social Justice in Sport. Her research interests focus on gender and leisure, feminist epistemologies, social inequalities and intersectionality. Beccy was a managing editor for the Routledge journal *Leisure Studies* between 2007 and 2014 and is currently on the Editorial Board of *Annals of Leisure Research*. She was an associate editor and board member for *Leisure Sciences* and is a member of the Leisure Studies Association.

Brianna Wyatt is a Senior Lecturer and the Postgraduate Subject Coordinator for the Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management programmes at Oxford Brookes University. Her primary research interests and industry experience centre on interpretation, storytelling and experience design in heritage and dark tourism. Brianna is also consulting academic with industry experience in heritage tourism, with her most recent work pertaining to interpretation and exhibition development for several penal heritage museums in the UK.

Events and Empowerment: Progressing the Research Agenda

Trudie Walters (Lincoln University, Aotearoa New Zealand)

Raphaela Stadler (MCI, Austria)

Allan Jepson (University of Hertfordshire, UK)

Abstract

Empowerment is often an implicit goal of events hosted in/by/for marginalised groups and communities. However, many studies into events and power focused on the negative aspects which resulted in disenfranchisement and disempowerment (Batty, 2016; Benfari et al., 1986; Clarke and Jepson, 2011). Our paper titled 'Positive power: events as temporary sites of power which "empower" marginalised groups' (Walters et al., 2021) extended and reframed how power can be understood in the context of events, seeking to understand the processes that facilitate empowerment for marginalised groups. We included 9 different events from across New Zealand and Australia, finding that that empowerment through events is possible but requires an explicit focus on creating both social-structural and psychological dimensions of empowerment. In our conclusion, we identified a number of future directions for researchers to engage with the framework, applying it and testing it in other leisure contexts and refining it further.

This interactive session will be a facilitated collaborative workshop aimed at progressing the research agenda around events and empowerment. The aims of the workshop are to:

- Identify researchers interested in working with the empowerment framework

- Form an international research consortium

- Generate a joint research project

- Progress the theoretical development of the framework

- Identify potential funding sources

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Trudie Walters is a Senior Lecturer at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki/Lincoln University in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research platform is centred on events and leisure as interdisciplinary lenses through which to understand the inner workings and values of society. Her work is firmly positioned within a social science framework, while clearly linking into the applied reality of events and leisure as social phenomena, areas of academic research, global industries, and practices. Trudie is a Board member and past President of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies, and serves on the Editorial Board of a number of top academic leisure and events journals.

Raphaela Stadler is Professor for Tourism and Event Management at MCI – Management Center Innsbruck, Austria. She holds a PhD from Griffith University, Australia, and spent several years as a senior lecturer in Event Management at the University of Hertfordshire (UK). She is currently working on various multidisciplinary research projects to better understand the sociological and psychological impacts contemporary leisure experiences (festivals, events, and tourism) have upon individuals, families, and communities. Her specific research interests and areas of expertise include community events and festivals, community cultural development, power and empowerment, memories, as well as wellbeing and quality-of-life.

Dr Allan Jepson is Principal Lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire, UK. His pioneering research critically examined community festivals, uncovering power imbalances that excluded local communities from the planning process. He has since dedicated his research to understanding contemporary leisure experiences, exploring their impact on well-being across various domains, including critical gerontology, community events, mental health, quality-of-life, and tourism. Dr Jepson's work investigates the intricate interplay between sociological, physiological, and psychological outcomes of leisure. Currently, his research focuses on neurodiversity and its implications for creating inclusive and accessible leisure practices for all.

Starting Lines, Turning Points, and Disputational Moments in the Sociology of Leisure

Felice Yuen (Concordia University, Canada)

Brett Lashua (University College London, UK)

Karl Spracklen (Leeds Beckett University, UK)

Corey W. Johnson (North Carolina State University, USA)

Allison Jeffrey (Bath University, UK)

Jessie Bustillos Morales (University College London, UK)

Rasul Mowatt, Professor (North Carolina State University, USA)

Holly Thorpe (University of Waikato, New Zealand)

Nicola De Martini Ugolotti (Bournemouth University, UK)

Ana Paula Cunha Pereira (Centro Universitário de Volta Redonda, Brazil)

Abstract

The proposed panel comprises the co-editors and a collection of contributors in the *Research Handbook on the Sociology of Leisure.* The purpose of this panel is threefold: 1) to highlight the first lines of inquiry that shaped the field of leisure, 2) to explore critical turning points, and 3) to call attention to moments of tension and critique. In an increasingly polarized and divided society (Baldassarri & Page, 2021), moments of collective reflection are more necessary than ever. The panel will emphasize how "wicked" social problems require a thorough "understanding of the problem[s]" (Schofield, 2024, p. 25) and a clear recognition of its complexities.

The panel builds upon the premise that the sociology of leisure offers opportunities to understand and address societal challenges. The editors (Spracklen, Lashua, and Yuen) present foundations for discussion, highlighting "starting lines" from a sociological perspective, contributions to knowledge production, and where these have led us today. Panellist Mowatt furthers the discussion by presenting the early work of W. E. B. Dubois and leveraging his work to critique contemporary racism(s) and anti-racism considerations and critiques . The impact of earlier works as "turning points" are continued with Johnson's consideration of leisure informed by Butler and Foucault and celebrations of non-normative and non-conforming gender and sexuality through a queer theoretical lens.

The panel will conclude with current disputational moments where leisure researchers engage in struggle. Morales explores how neoliberal education transforms youth social media engagements from leisure activities to school commodities. De Martini Ugolotti argues for critical sociological perspectives recognizing political and historical processes shaping refugees' leisure lives. Jeffrey and Thorpe close the panel, encouraging scholars to consider feminist materialist approaches for rethinking leisure in the climate emergency, leaning into tensions of joy and suffering while moving in environments that are human and nonhuman.

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Presenter Biographies

Felice Yuen is a Professor in the Department of Applied Human Sciences, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. She has been exploring experiences and meanings of healing with Indigenous women for the past two decades (see www.collective-healing.net). Leisure as context for healing, social justice, and social transformation are at the heart of her research. She employs arts-based approaches in her research (e.g., body mapping, photographs, collage, poetry). Indigenous methodologies and participatory action research guide the critical approach she brings to her work.

Brett Lashua teaches sociology of media at the Institute of Education, University College London. He has worked with schools, community centers, musicians and arts organizations in the USA, Canada, and the UK to address questions of leisure and youth media, racialized borderlands, and urban spaces. His research is underscored by creative and collaborative methods including participatory music-making, cultural mapping, documentary filmmaking, and digital storytelling, as well as archival approaches. His most recent co-edited book is *Popular Music in Leeds: Histories, Heritage, People and Places* (Intellect, 2023).

Karl Spracklen is an Associate Professor of Sociology of Leisure and Culture at Leeds Beckett University and has published extensively on leisure and culture. He has research interests on leisure theory, the new work and the new leisure, and the on-going contestation of leisure spaces through hegemony and counter-hegemonic resistance. He is currently in the middle of an auto-ethnographic exploration of fell-running, and getting very muddy and scarred in this epistemology of extremity. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*, published by Springer.

Allison Jeffrey is a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) of Sport Marketing and Coaching in the Department for Health at the University of Bath. Her research interests include gender, health and wellbeing, physical activity, feminist materialisms and posthumanism. For her postdoctoral studies, she engaged in post-structural theory to discuss women's experiences of aging and dance. Dr Jeffrey is currently involved in a range of international projects that attempt to broaden understandings around the gendered dimensions and natural-cultural influences that contribute to experiences in sport and leisure pursuits.

Corey W. Johnson is the Karla A. Henderson Distinguished Professor in Park, Recreation, and Tourism Management at North Carolina State University. His inquiry focuses on power relations between the dominant and non-dominant groups in leisure, and he is also a qualitative research methodologist for social justice. His projects include the decrease of gender-based violence online, critique of privileged identities and digital systems, and how people use apps for developing more-than-romantic-intimate-sexual relations. He has received the Distinguished Researcher Award from The Academy of Leisure Sciences and the MLK Jr. Achieving the Dream Award.

Jessie A. Bustillos Morales lectures in the Department of Learning and Leadership at the Institute of Education, UCL's Faculty of Education. Jessie is an educator, researcher and writer from Venezuela. Her research has focused on understanding how various identity-based inequalities are reproduced in educational spaces and practices and how they impact on the lives of children and young people. Jessie's research is published in academic journals, and she has co-edited several books published by Routledge, including *Understanding Education and Economics: Key Debates and Critical Perspectives* (2020) and *Questioning Gender Politics: Contextualising Educational Disparities in Uncertain Times* (2024).

Rasul A. Mowatt is a Department Head in the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University with four areas of focus: geographies of Race; geographies of violence; production of public space; and, critical theory. Relevant work, "A People's History of Leisure Studies: Old Knowledge, New Knowledge and *The Philadelphia Negro* as a Foundational Text" with Myron Floyd and Kevin Hylton appeared in the first volume, first issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure.* Three additional key texts are: *The Geographies of Threat* (2021); *Laundering Black Rage* (2024); and, *The City of Hip-Hop* (2025).

Holly Thorpe is an award-winning sociologist working in the Division of Health at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. She embraces opportunities to work across disciplines and is passionate about exploring social theories and methods that are responsive to the changing world. She has published over 100 articles and chapters; her most recent books include *Sport and Physical Culture in Global Pandemic Times* (edited with David Andrews and Joshua Newman, 2023), *Action Sports and the Olympic Games: Past, Present, Future* (with Belinda Wheaton, 2022), and *Feminist New Materialisms, Sport and Fitness: A Lively Entanglement* (with Julie Brice and Marianne Clark, 2020).

Nicola De Martini Ugolotti is Senior Lecturer in Sport and Physical Culture at Bournemouth University (UK) and member of Associazione Frantz Fanon (Italy). His research engages with leisure as a lens to understand experiences and negotiations of (forced) migration, overlapping inequalities and uneven social transformation across different materialisations of the urban. Nicola is Associate Editor for the *Leisure Sciences* and *Leisure Studies* journals and member of the Editorial Board of the *Sociology of Sport* journal. His monograph "*Music, Forced Migration and Emplacement: Sounds of Asylum Bristol*" was published with Palgrave MacMillan in 2024.

Ana Paula Cunha Pereira teaches on the Educational Laws and Policies and History of Education at Centro Universitário de Volta Redonda (UniFOA) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is also involved with the Master's program in Professional Teaching in Health and Environmental Sciences at the university. Her current research explores the cultural meanings of health, with a particular focus on teaching processes. She was a visiting researcher at Leeds Metropolitan University (now Leeds Beckett University), under the supervision of Professor Jonathan Long (2011), funded by the Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education (CAPES).

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Alleycat Races and the Right to the City: Producing the Streets as the Urban Common

Norman Duncan (University of the West of Scotland, UK)

Claire Tayler (Filmmaker)

Abstract

The neo-liberalisation of society has fundamentally altered the social relations that produce the City. Many of the City's aspects, once considered an urban common, have undergone processes of enclosure that commodify the City (Smith, 2002), extract its value, and alienate its participants from the urban common they produce, thereby eroding the right to the City (Harvey, 2012). Key sights of this enclosure are the streets that weave throughout the City, which provide the means for the bike-messenger participate in the production of value. The bike-messenger, however, leads a dual existence, and while during the workday the enclosure of the streets provides them with the means of production, their social lives are orientated around the assumption of the right to the city (Kidder, 2011). Alleycats, the illicit, illegal, and unsanctioned races hosted by bike-messengers turn the City into their ad hoc racetrack (Eichler, 2017) and maintain the streets as a social focal point (Wehr, 2006), beyond their utilitarian uses (Kidder, 2011). As bike-messengers occupy the streets during alleycats, using them for their own ends, for fun, it appears that their participation in the production of the City alters the dominance of its underlying neoliberal social relations and resists the enclosure of the urban common. This documentary explores the production of space during alleycats and finds that, in the enclosed city, these races enact a process of commoning for their streets, causing on one hand friction and conflict with the proponents of enclosure, but on the other, emancipation for the bike-messenger who spends their life so intimately tied to the streets of the City.

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Presenter Biographies

Norman Duncan is former bike-messenger and doctoral candidate in the Centre for Culture, Sport and Events at the University of the West of Scotland. His research concerns the role of events tourism in the production of the urban common and how it may alter the underlying social relations of the City. Using events hosted by bike-messengers as a case study, the research seeks to explore avenues for the reinforcement of the right to the City and the role of global networking in urban organising.

Claire Tayler is a filmmaker and bike messenger, born and raised in southeast England, now based in Berlin. She worked in advertising for eight years, before a solo trip across the USA sparked working as a bike messenger in a Berlin collective for four years. Last year she put out "From Scratch & Other Stories": a documentary series exploring bike messenger and alt cycling culture in Seoul, South Korea. She's interested in our relationship to ourselves through bikes, particularly around the feelings and processes that evolve whilst working on bikes in cities, and the communities that grow around this.

Poster Presentations

Privilege and Power in the PE Teacher Stereotype – A Critical Exploration of Ableist Constructs within PE Initial Teacher Training

Ellen-Alyssa Gambles (University of Sunderland, UK)

Steven Anderson (University of Sunderland, UK)

Alexandra Brown (University of Sunderland, UK)

Abstract

There is no data for the number of disabled Physical Education (PE) teachers in England however, the limited data for the percentage of disabled individuals in the teaching profession suggests that they are significantly underrepresented (DfE, 2024). The hegemonic stereotypical PE teacher is based upon an inherent athletic appearance of 'fit and healthy' (Fisette, 2015; González-Calvo and Gerdin, 2023). This perception appears to exclude other types of bodies from the PE classroom and may be influential in perpetuating social constructs that marginalise disabled children and adults from physical activity. Therefore, it is critical that PE Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students acquire an awareness of their power and privilege to challenge ableist beliefs surrounding disability and promote inclusion.

A qualitative questionnaire conducted with 19 PE ITT students (years 1-3) explored their perceptions of disability within the secondary school setting. Questions identified participants' perceptions of PE teachers' stereotypical looks and of individuals with different categories of disabilities being able to become a PE teacher, the barriers and facilitators to disabled PE teachers and how the degree programme raises awareness of disability. Data were thematically analysed.

Whilst student perceptions of the PE teacher stereotype were aligned with the hegemonic descriptors, their opinions also focused on different priorities. The students had concerns for negative impacts on pupil learning, or that the physicality of the role would impede disabled PE teachers, whereas others inferred that the disabled teacher could be assimilated into the school without inclusive accommodations being made. Some students believed there were no barriers for disabled PE teachers but the majority failed to consider their own attitudes and privilege as potential barriers.

To advance inclusivity in teaching, ITT provision must overcome common misconceptions of disability and develop a fuller appreciation in students of the pervasiveness of barriers faced by people with a disability.

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Presenter Biographies

Ellen-Alyssa Fiona Gambles (PhD) is a Lecturer in Physical Education Initial Teacher Training at the University of Sunderland, and has been the Chair of the University Enable (disability) Staff Network for 4 years. Ellen has recently published a co-edited book entitled 'Teaching Games and Sport for Understanding', co-authored a critical pedagogies case study on the confidence and competence of pre-service primary teachers, and co-authored two articles in PE Matters. Her areas of research include the application of sociological theory and critical pedagogies to health and physical education with particular focus on equity, equality, diversity and inclusion and game-based approaches.

Steven David Anderson (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in Physical Education with Qualified Teacher Status within the Faculty of Education, Society & Creative Industries at the University of Sunderland. He is the Programme Leader for BSc (Hons) Physical Education with QTS. Steven possesses the Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. He has six peer- reviewed publications across the areas of physical education, psychology and teaching and learning, having disseminated his research both nationally and internationally. His main research interests include health and physical education with particular focus on the national curriculum for physical education and game-based approaches.

Alexandra Brown is a Lecturer in the School of Education within the Faculty of Education, Society & Creative Industries at the University of Sunderland as well as a part time dance teacher. Alexandra leads Physical Education across all primary programmes and has recently featured on the PE Insights podcast discussing her experiences lecturing PE within Higher Education. Her previous research includes work around centre assessment grades during the Covid19 project and initial and diagnostic assessment within Further Education.

Feminist Placemaking in Leisure: A Scoping Review of Gender-Responsive Public Spaces and Adolescent Wellbeing

Katie King (North Carolina State University, USA)

Michael B. Edwards (North Carolina State University, USA)

Kimberly A. Bush (North Carolina State University, USA)

Abstract

Leisure spaces, including parks, gyms, and recreation facilities have long been shaped by patriarchal norms that privilege male participation and visibility, often leading to the exclusion or marginalization of girls and women (Aitchison, 2003; Wearing, 1998). Leisure influences individual and community health which directly impacts quality of life. Feminist placemaking challenges these inequities by integrating gender-responsive approaches to leisure design, ensuring public and recreational spaces foster inclusion, agency, and wellbeing (Whitzman et al., 2012). This step towards social justice creates a direct pipeline for increasing access and opportunities for health benefits in spaces often consumed by boys and men. According to J. Arinder (2020), feminist theory draws on the voices and lived experiences of all individuals facing oppression. Employing a feminist theory allows us to uncover the inequalities, cultural meanings, and power dynamics that inform experiences and reactions within these spaces (Bassam, 2023). This gender-responsive approach means recognizing and addressing the diverse needs, viewpoints, and representations of all genders. To be truly responsive, initiatives must extend beyond raising awareness and actively combat inequalities and foster gender equality (Groves-Williams, 2024).

This scoping review addresses a critical gap by examining how feminist placemaking principles intersect with adolescent health outcomes in leisure spaces. While feminist placemaking has been explored in urban planning and public health, its specific applications to leisure environments and their impact on adolescent physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing remain under examined. The methods follow Arskey and O'Malley's framework (2005) by systematically mapping existing literature across these disciplines, this review identifies emerging connections, areas for further research, and opportunities to advance gender-equitable leisure spaces. Findings will provide a conceptual roadmap for future leisure research and practice, identifying both the theoretical and applied implications of feminist placemaking in fostering equitable leisure spaces.

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Presenter Biographies

Katie King is a second-year doctoral student at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC. Her research interests include community health, gender equity in sports, sobriety within recreation, sport, and leisure, and feminist placemaking. She has experience working in both the public sector and nonprofit agencies delivering health education and recreation programming throughout Metro Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan. She also serves as DEIJ chair for the department's Graduate Student Association and for the College of Natural Resources. She has a very cute puppy named Burke.

Mike Edwards is an Associate Professor of Sport Management at NC State University, where he teaches courses in sport finance, event management, and research methods. His scholarship focuses on sport for development, with an emphasis on health promotion, youth engagement, and community partnerships. Mike also serves as an associate editor for Leisure Sciences and has led international engagement projects, including a recent initiative supporting youth sport and coach education in South Africa.

Dr Kimberley Bush is the Associate Department Head/Community Program Coordinator and Teaching Professor in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at NC State University, where she teaches a variety of sport management courses. Her scholarship is generally related to issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice as well as the mental and physical well-being of college students and student-athletes. The land grant mission is central to her teaching, mentoring, and scholarship; thus, she intentionally creates and fosters service-learning opportunities for students and engagement with local youth.

Will Brands with Dynamic Logos Appear More Exciting and Authentic in Branded Leisure Metaverse Spaces?

Begona Paz Medina Labayru (York St John University, UK)
Dmytro Moisieiev (York St John University, UK)
Matthew Spokes (York St John University, UK)

Abstract

This research explores how dynamic logos—designed to evolve and adapt—influence whether metaverse users see brands as more exciting and authentic in the leisure spaces they occupy. The metaverse is an immersive virtual space where people engage in leisure activities such as gaming, socialising, shopping, and attending events, enabling real-time interaction as avatars, regardless of their physical location. As younger generations are already there, and participation across all demographics increases daily, brands are entering the metaverse to connect with audiences, often through gamified virtual brand experiences.

As technologies evolve and audiences adopt them, brands must remain aligned with market demands and trends. This requires unprecedented flexibility to adapt to a new exciting way of engaging with audiences within the metaverse, primarily for leisure rather than solely for commercial purposes. Unlike static logos, dynamic logos may better fit the exciting nature of these virtual leisure spaces and expectations about them, potentially increasing the perception of brand authenticity. We check whether this is due to brands with dynamic logos being perceived as more exciting. We also investigate how the sense of flow, i.e. being "there" and fully immersed, could affect brand authenticity. Furthermore, we explore how metaverse users perceive dynamic logos' consistency in the metaverse.

This study will involve an experiment in which 350 participants will play with two identical virtual leisure spaces, one with a static logo displayed and the other with a dynamic logo. Afterward, participants will complete a questionnaire assessing brand authenticity, personality, consistency, and flow in the metaverse.

This research contributes to understanding how logos could be successfully adapted to this new virtual era. It provides practical guidance for brands seeking to appear consistent, exciting and authentic in the metaverse while contributing to the knowledge about the interplay between logo design and brand perceptions.

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Presenter Biographies

Begona Medina Labayru is a Brand Designer currently pursuing an MA by Research at York St John University on branding in the metaverse. Her research focuses on how brands must adapt their branding strategies and visual identities to this new era, where virtual brand experiences provide innovative ways to engage consumers and reach new audiences.

Dr Dmytro Moisieiev is a Senior Lecturer in Business Management at York St John University. He has switched from a career in corporate strategic planning to academic research into consumer behaviour. His research is about emotion, consumer decision-making and branding. He also does consulting work for local UK authorities and not-for-profits on regenerative tourism and data analytics.

Matthew Spokes (York St John University, UK)

Balancing Nature-Based Tourism and Ecological Integrity: Mitigating Human-Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka's Protected Areas

Pathirana, M.T. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Warnakula, U.S. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

De Silva, M. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Heenatigala, M.S.H. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Abstract

The ongoing human-elephant conflict in Sri Lanka, responsible for the deaths of over 100 elephants and humans annually, poses a significant challenge to conservation efforts (Rathnayake, 2021). Simultaneously, elephants have become a key tourist attraction, contributing substantially to the country's tourism industry, with national parks such as Minneriya, Udawalawe, and Kaudulla drawing millions of visitors (Ranaweerage et al., 2015). The increasing tourist numbers, however, have led to a delicate tension between nature-based leisure activities and ecological integrity, particularly as tourism has been found to disturb elephant behaviour, causing heightened stress, aggression, and reduced feeding time (Ranaweerage et al., 2015).

This research explores how nature-based tourism can be balanced with the ecological needs of elephants and the surrounding environment, focusing on the intersections of sustainability, conservation, and leisure. As per the Köpke et al (2021) and Malley and Gorenflo (2023) this research used Social-Ecological Systems framework to employ qualitative interviews with tourists (56), local residents (42), and park officials (10) in key Minneriya, Kaudulla, Habarana, Kalwewa, Kekirawa regions in Sri Lanka. Data collection undertaken during April to June in 2024. Thematic analysis reveals that while tourism provides economic benefits, it contributes significantly to stress-related behaviours in elephants, particularly when tourists approach too closely or fail to adhere to park guidelines (Rathnayake, 2021). Such behaviours not only threaten elephant well-being but also escalate human-elephant conflict as elephants become more aggressive towards humans.

Recommendations from this study include the introduction of stricter regulations for tourist behaviour, such as maintaining a safe distance from elephants, limiting vehicle noise, and controlling the number of vehicles in proximity to wildlife. Additionally, implementing educational programmes on sustainable tourism practices and conservation, as well as introducing a conservation tax to fund human-elephant conflict mitigation, is crucial to ensuring the long-term protection of both elephants and local communities (Rathnayake, 2021; Ranaweerage et al., 2015). Achieving this balance is essential for addressing global environmental challenges while promoting sustainable tourism practices.

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Presenter Biographies

Dr Madura Thivanka Pathirana is a Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management at Edith Cowan University, specializing in sustainable business management, with a particular focus on tourism. He holds a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, UK, and his research centers on integrating sustainability into business practices, especially within small island developing states (SIDS). Dr Pathirana has contributed significantly to the field of sustainable tourism through his research and practical initiatives, including his funded projects such as "Learning for Survival" and the "Sri Lankan Delights Initiative." He has supervised numerous postgraduate theses and developed courses on sustainable tourism and strategic management. Dr Pathirana is actively engaged in the academic community as an editorial board member for the *Journal of Management & Organization* and a co-chair for international symposia. He also contributes to community engagement through projects like the Sorabora Tourism Village and training programs for local youth in sustainable business practices, supported by DFAT Australia.

Sachith Himal Heenatigala is an experienced Sustainable and Renewable Energy Consultant with extensive management expertise. Holds a B.Tech. in Electrical Engineering and an MSc in Sustainability and Renewables. Proven track record in managing Solar PV projects, ensuring adherence to sustainability principles and regulatory standards. Skilled in feasibility studies, design, planning, and execution of renewable energy projects. Adept at coordinating with stakeholders, optimizing performance, and implementing strategic solutions. Proficient in project management tools like PVSyst, SolarEdge, and MS Projects. Known for leadership, problem-solving, and driving efficiency in renewable energy initiatives, contributing to a low-carbon, sustainable future.

De Silva, M. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)

Heenatigala, M.S.H. (Edith Cowan University, Sri Lanka)