Chapter 4

From #Gamergate to #Feminism: Gender and Leisure

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"#Gamergate leads to death threats against women in the gaming industry."
—"#Gamergate Leads" (2014, Headline)

In 2014, a group of women and agender video game developers created games with diverse storylines, such as dealing with depression, and representative of diverse characters, such as women of different races and ethnicities with various body types, playing different roles. These storylines and characters did not fit with the "traditional" mold of the mainstream gaming world (i.e., guns, fast cars, violence, and sexualization and objectification of women) and represented women in more diverse ways. Men[1] gamers, game developers, and critics who felt the "traditional" gaming world was being threatened attacked this group through a loosely organized misogynistic harassment campaign with the hashtag #Gamergate.

The intent of #Gamergate was to silence these women and agender individuals through fear, intimidation, and violence. Notably, game developers Brianna Wu and Zoe Quinn were targeted with rape and death threats (Hart, 2014). Similarly, feminist media critic Anita Sarkeesian (2013), the creator of a YouTube video series Tropes vs. Women in Video Games, was targeted (and continues to be targeted) and forced to cancel a speaking engagement at Utah State University after receiving online threats of a massacre at the event, including the staff at a women's center (Kelion, 2014).

While on the surface #Gamergate is about women's rights and video games (often considered a leisure activity), it is much bigger than that. #Gamergate is a blueprint for anti-women movements and, importantly, it occurs in a leisure industry that can have significant impact both for and against gender justice (see Aitchison, 2013). In this chapter, gender justice is understood as a process that allows for social, political, and economic equity across the gender spectrum (Kirp et al., 1986; Watson & Scraton, 2017).

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[1]Certainly not *all* #Gamergate supporters were men; we do know that several of the people who attacked game developers were men, some self-identified and some caught by the FBI (though no convictions were made). Many of the people in support of #Gamergate posted anonymously with no mention of their gender.

As such, #Gamergate serves as a useful entry point into a discussion of gender and leisure, recreation, and sport. (For a more thorough review of key terms related to gender see "The Gender Unicorn" at https://transstudent.org/gender/). This chapter discusses key lessons about gender and leisure that can be gleaned from #Gamergate and that are important for students, practitioners, and researchers to understand, examine, and emphasize as they work to create more diverse and inclusive leisure, recreation, and sport opportunities, spaces, and organizations. These lessons include

- Gender equality and equity remain a goal
- A person's gender (and their other identities) impacts their leisure
- No leisure space is apolitical
- Leisure services professionals are responsible for what sort of culture we curate (or decline to curate) in leisure spaces

The primary focus of this chapter is the intersection of gender(s), sexuality, and leisure in relation to women's leisure, men's leisure, and sexism. However, as other chapters illustrate, it is critical to consider women's and men's leisure experiences (this chapter) *and* transgender and gender nonbinary people's experiences (Chapter 5) and those of 2SLGBTQ identities (Chapter 6).

#1: Gender Equality and Equity Remain a Goal

We have all heard it…
"Men and women are equal now." "The glass ceiling is broken!" #IDontNeedFeminism
…We wish it were true.

#Gamergate, and the gender disparity issues it illuminates in video games and game design, is one of many examples indicating we have not reached gender equality or gender equity. The difference between equality and equity is important. Equality is sameness, where everyone is given the same thing. To make everyone "equal" by giving them the same thing assumes that everyone starts in the same position of power (with class, gender, sexuality, etc.). Equity on the other hand is where everyone is given the support they need to participate equally; the playing field is leveled to accommodate for different levels of access and privilege. For example, imagine three people, one who has $1, one who has $100, and one who has $1,000. Everyone wants to buy a $1,000 auction item. To treat them "equally" would mean giving them all the same thing: $1,000; however, one person would still have lots more money than the others and could therefore win the auction. To treat them equitably mean giving $999 to the person with $1, $900 to the person with $100, and $0 to the person with $1,000. This way they would have equal opportunity to buy the $1,000 item. Importantly, we cannot enjoy equality until we ensure equity. Returning to the notion that we have not yet reached gender equality or equity, we can look to several national and international metrics to help understand this reality:

- Economic and government
    - In almost every country in the world, women earn less than men for doing the same job. In the United States, women earn only 82% of what men earn doing the same job (AAUW, 2020); in Australia, women earn 78.7% of what men make, with a lifetime earnings gap of 38.8%. This means if a man earned

$1,000,000 over his lifetime, a woman working the same job would earn $612,000 (Commonwealth Government of Australia, 2020).

- The population of the United States is 50.8% women; however, in 2020, only 7% of Fortune 500 CEOs were women, and only two positions were held by women of color; only 24% of the members of U.S. Congress were women (29% in Canada's Parliament); and only 18% of U.S. governors were women (in 2020, there were no women provincial premiers in Canada and only one territorial leader; Kingston, 2019; Warner et al., 2018).

- Health
  - Globally, the World Health Organization (2017) reported that 1 in 3 women will experience physical or sexual violence from a male partner or sexual violence from a male nonpartner in their lifetime. Pause and think about that statistic again. *One in every 3 women.*

These metrics represent a few of the many examples of the persistence of gender inequalities and inequities, and they persist because of sexism. But what is sexism? In 2019, the first international legal definition of sexism, along with comprehensive recommendations to stop it, emerged. Sexism is

any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice, or behaviour based upon the idea that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex [or gender], which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline. (Council of Europe, 2019, Definition section)

Defining sexism with an agreed-upon international definition is critical to fighting it, providing a means to clearly and legally identify it, name it, and call it out when we see it. In addition to defining sexism, the Council of Europe importantly explained one of the root causes of sexism: gender stereotypes. Sexism is "widespread and prevalent in all sectors and all societies" (Council of Europe, 2019, para. 1) and "sexism and sexist behaviours are rooted in and reinforce gender stereotypes" (Council of Europe, 2019, Context section, para. 5). Gender stereotypes are blanket statements about how someone is expected (by society at large) to either perform or express their gender. For example, "women are emotional, should be 'pretty,' and should like to cook, clean, and have babies," and "men don't cry, don't ask for directions, and like cars, beer, and sports." It is important to understand that *gender* (as well as gender stereotypes) is a *social construction*[2], which means that society collectively decides what it means to be a "man" or a "woman" and how a person *should* express their gender. This means that biology does not determine, for example, that a woman should like pink and wear her hair long or that a man should like football and drink beer. Gender is predominantly constructed (throughout most of the world) in a binary system (men/women) with men as the dominant group (or the group in power). Sexism is used to uphold this hierarchy and can result in physical and emotional violence for women and girls. The Council of Europe (2019) made a clear link between sexism and violence against women and girls: "Sexism is linked to violence against women and girls, whereby acts of 'everyday' sexism are part of a continuum

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[2] *Social constructionism* is "a view that concepts are defined by human beings and can vary depending on cultural and historical contexts, including "traits that appear to be immutable or biological such as gender, race, and sexual orientation" (Berbary & Samdahl, 2013). There is *nothing biological* that determines, for example, that girls should play with dolls or that women should *not* be interested in developing and critiquing video games.

of violence creating a climate of intimidation, fear, discrimination, exclusion and insecurity which limits opportunities and freedom" (para. 1).

On the basis of this definition, #Gamergate is clearly an overt example of sexism within one leisure industry. The gaming industry has historically been dominated by men as the primary producers and consumers of gaming content. The game developers and critics affected by #Gamergate were targeted because they were not men and were creating content that promoted gender inclusion. As such, they were perceived as a threat to *patriarchy*, that is, the "hierarchical historical systems of rule and domination by men" (Bromley, 2012, p. 5) that privilege men in society (a type of privilege referred to as *male privilege*). One way to maintain patriarchal power and male privilege is by promoting *binary[3] thinking* about gender and normalizing violence against women through tactics such as victim-blaming, or putting the onus on women to protect themselves against violence (rather than putting responsibility on perpetrators to stop assaulting women). Sadly, this example mirrors sexism in many leisure spaces from race car driving (see Tatiana Calderón's story) to athletics (see women's salaries and TV coverage of WNBA and the 2019 Women's FIFA World Cup teams' experiences of sexism) to dance (which has a disproportionate number of women choreographers). Thus, it is not surprising that challenging sexism and binary thinking perpetuated in leisure contexts is beneficial to women; however, it also benefits men.

How does working for gender equality and equity benefit men? The way we construct "masculinity" and the often obligatory and toxic impact of "masculine" gender roles for men are important issues for us to discuss, especially in recreation and leisure contexts. In particular, the unhealthy, constraining, or dangerous elements of what we believe men "should" do, be, and act all of us from living healthier lives. For example, the tropes that men should "be tough," "never cry," and "be dominant…wear the pants" can be limiting for a man's life and can encourage violence (against women or other men) as a way to establish masculine dominance. But why would men want to work to change a system in which they have privilege and power?

When advocates and researchers say that men hold power in Western society, this power is always relative to others and contained. Not all men hold power equally, just like not all women or other individuals with different gender identities are equally subjugated by that power. In the real world, although men might hold power overall, a movement toward gender equity and equality will benefit many men as well—and a clear individual benefit would be the freedom to express oneself in a whole host of ways that were previously categorized as "feminine" without fear of physical or emotional violence or repercussions.

In the example of #Gamergate, those who were attacked during the height of #Gamergate were working toward integrating traditionally underrepresented people into video game culture as characters and protagonists in stories. Although they called for more of these kinds of characters, they were not calling for the elimination of more "traditional" video game characters, only for better representation. Video games are a multibillion-dollar industry, and the inclusion of more diverse characters and story lines is not likely to negatively affect the types of video games played by hundreds of millions of players every year. In fact, inclusion of this type is likely to widen the appeal of video games to more demographics; increase industry revenues; and allow for faster, better, and more diverse development going forward. This scenario not only expands the range of people who get to game but may also benefit the men who

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[3]**Binary**: "Abstractly representing something as containing two parts (e.g. gender: woman/man). Unlike a dichotomy, one side of a binary is represented as more dominant and privileged than the other [e.g., gender expression: Masculine characteristics are privileged over feminine characteristics]. The constructs in a binary are always opposite so that one is defined by being not-the-other" (Berbary & Samdahl, 2013).

might push back against this kind of game development. This is one reason men might choose to work for gender justice in their leisure spaces.

As discussed, fighting the toxic traits of some masculinities can benefit all of us, even men. However, *how* might we go about resisting such toxic traits? A place to start is an examination of language; how does the language you use in daily life challenge or reinforce stereotypes around masculinity? Think about more overt language such as "quit being a pussy/girl/little bitch" as well as more "innocent" or covert language such as "boys will be boys." Another way that men can work for gender justice is by joining the *feminist movement* (see Text Box 4.1) alongside women.

Text Box 4.1: When You Hear the Word "Feminism," What Do You Think Of?

In thinking about this question, Bromley (2012) shared, "You might find yourself in a quandary. You might be curious, furious, or you might just want to run for cover" (p. 1). Why? Because "feminism" is a word that gets used, but also abused, a lot, especially on social media (#feminism, #womensmarch, #metoo), as noted by Lopez et al. (2019). More specifically, many negative stereotypes associated with the word "feminism" (and with being a feminist) are reproduced in everyday culture (think bra-burning, hairy armpit, man-hating). These stereotypes—along with the many definitions and meanings of feminism, different types of feminism, schools of thought about feminism, and feminist theories—can make it difficult to understand feminism (Valenti, 2014). To help you do so, read this definition of feminism from hooks (2000): *"Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression"* (p. 1). With this definition in mind, feminism is about an openness and willingness to take a critical lens when thinking about lived experiences and the ways they are gendered, raced, classed, and so forth—asking questions, finding answers, and fostering social change (Bromley, 2012).


This section discussed that we have not yet reached gender equity or equality and why working toward that goal could be beneficial for everyone. Next, this chapter explores gendered leisure constraints that may keep a person from fully participating in leisure activities and/or spaces.

#2: A Person's Gender Impacts their Leisure

As we continue with our gaming theme, imagine that you are Tiffany, a 15-year-old girl whose friends invite you to play Grand Theft Auto V with them after school. How might you feel when you enter the game and realize that the only playable characters are male? How might you feel when you see the women characters (see Figure 4.1) represented in sexualized ways? How might these realizations shape your leisure experience?

Because gender is socially constructed, it can play a role in defining what type of work a person does or thinks they should do, as well as what leisure activities they might participate in, how they participate, where they participate, and how safe they feel during their leisure time. Shaw (1999) noted, the "factors that prevent, reduce, or modify participation, or may adversely affect the quality or enjoyment of leisure" (p. 274), such as the ones related to gender described in the introduction, are referred to as leisure constraints (initially conceptualized as leisure barriers).

One of the best-known models related to leisure constraints is the hierarchical constraints model proposed by Crawford et al. (1991) that includes three types of constraints that can

Figure 4.1
Grand Theft Auto V / GTA 5
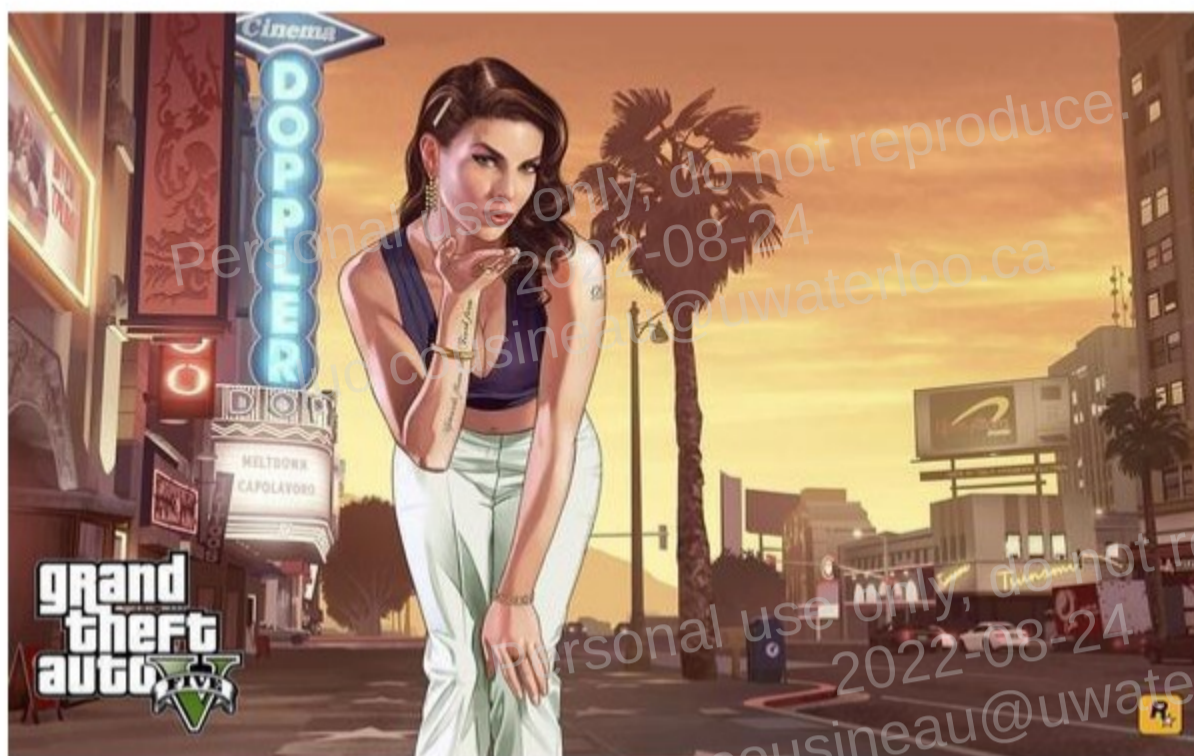
Note. Graphic from Wallpaper Gaming (n.d.) and marked with CC PDM 1.0
(https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/60e739c4-9455-425e-b838-4867006613cb).

impact leisure participation. First, intrapersonal constraints refer to individual psychological factors that can impact preferences and interests in leisure (e.g., not thinking you have the skills needed to participate). Second, interpersonal constraints are based on how a person's relationships with others can impact leisure (e.g., not wanting to participate alone or not playing with a group you find too competitive). Finally, structural constraints impact a person's interest in participating in an activity and their actual participation in that activity (e.g., societal stereotyping of an activity as one best suited to a particular gender [dance = women, wrestling = men], availability of gender inclusive restrooms at an event).

Gender stereotypes have received specific attention as constraints in leisure literature. Gender stereotypes act in broad ways to constrain people's leisure. They reinforce traditional (and simplistic) expectations that certain leisure activities are more appropriate for men and/or boys and that other leisure activities are more appropriate for women and/or girls. As an example of gender stereotypes continuing to persist in leisure, in 2016, several community centers in Ontario, Canada, faced backlash for the names and content of the programming they developed for girls and boys (see Figure 4.2). In this example, the titles and descriptions reinforce binary gendered norms for boys and girls.

Samdahl (2013) noted that much of the early gender and leisure research used constraints to describe the ways women's and girls' leisure can be constrained differently from men's and boy's leisure. For example, women have been socialized to adopt an ethic of care that emphasizes the importance of relationships in a woman's life. Research has shown gendered expectations that are reinforced by an ethic of care (the need to be nurturing, selfless, etc.) are more likely to constrain women's access to personal leisure because women may feel as if they need to put the leisure needs of others above their own (see Sullivan, 2013). However, leisure researchers have also explored the ways girls and women can respond to and negotiate gendered leisure constraints. For example, Valtchanov and Parry (2016), in their study of adolescent immigrant girls, found girls in their study used digital leisure to negotiate constraints and connect with family and friends.

Figure 4.2
Twitter Screenshot Showing Programming Developed for Boys and Girls
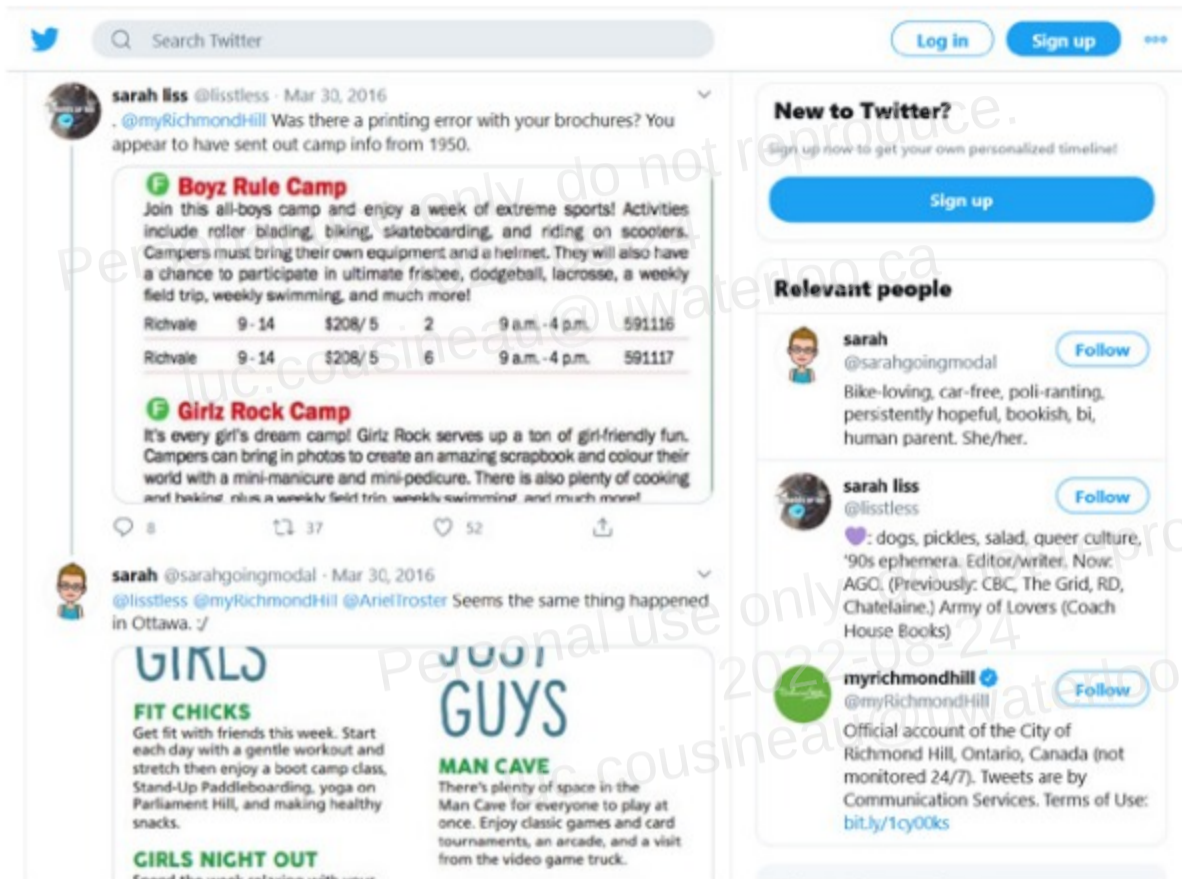
Note. From ".@myRichmondHill Was" [Tweet], by S. List, 2016
(https://twitter.com/lisstless/status/715161467490799616).

Men and boys also face gendered leisure constraints, although the way these constraints manifest might look a little different for women and girls. For example, look at sports injury. Perhaps you (or someone you know) have experienced an injury while playing and been told to "shake/walk it off." While in rare cases continuing to use an injured part of your body can help reduce swelling, often pain is the body's way of telling you to back off, slow down, or stop. The idea of "playing through the pain" demonstrates dominance, superiority over physical stress, and lack of fear—all traits that are stereotypically associated with "manly" men. These traits also happen to be detrimental to our health and well-being (Cranswick et al., 2020). Playing through injury is not about the love of the game; it is about control, especially if you are doing sport for leisure. The idea of overcoming physical and psychological harm with "grit" and "fortitude" limits men's and boys' abilities in decision making about what might be best for them when injured. Gender-based stereotypes also limit boys' engagement with some forms of leisure including dancing, figure skating, and other activities and sports because of the negative view in relation to masculinity.

In a discussion of the ways individuals face gender-based constraints to leisure participation, it is also important to recognize the ways multiple layers of oppression impact access and engagement, and that women and individuals with identities that place them in other subordinated groups may face greater constraints to accessing leisure (Henderson, 2016). This idea is known as intersectionality and is of critical importance to understand for those working for gender justice in leisure organizations.

While a person's gender certainly impacts their leisure, we must consider gender along with other identities a person holds for a more holistic view of their leisure experiences. For example, Person #1, who identifies as a Black lesbian woman, will have a different leisure experience from Person #2, who identifies as a White heterosexual woman, because all of Person #1's identities are subordinate, whereas only one of the identities of Person #2 is subordinate.

The concept of intersectionality was originally introduced by Crenshaw (1989). Since then, other feminist scholars (e.g., Bhavnani, 1997; Collins, 1990; hooks, 2000; Watson & Scraton, 2013) have emphasized the importance of, and need for, analyses that utilize an intersectional lens to understand difference.

Intersectionality asserts that forms of oppression such as sexism, racism, classism, colonialism, or homophobia do not act independently of one another, and this interaction contributes further to social inequality. This examination of intersectionality can lead to a greater understanding of women's and men's leisure. Feminist researchers studying leisure, for example, must consider racism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression that limit the leisure opportunities of individuals (Henderson & Gibson, 2013, p. 128)

Intersectionality considers the ways attributes come together along axes of inequality and interact with each other to shape lived experiences in diverse, dynamic, and complex ways. As a lens to understand lived experiences, it emphasizes how people can experience both privilege and oppression (Dill et al., 2007) and that axes of inequality are not disconnected from each other (Bhavnani & Talcott, 2012). To understand lived experiences and intersectionality, we need to consider these axes in interconnecting ways, each one adding complexity to their meeting point. These axes are also affected by the social setting, so the experience of a Black or Indigenous Person of Color (BIPOC) is different in their cultural community than it might be in predominantly White spaces. In this way, intersectionality stands in contrast to analyses that consider gender in an *isolated way* (e.g., where gender is the only attribute considered in the analysis) or in an *additive way* (where a certain attribute is positioned as the primary attribute of analysis). In turn, intersectionality is a valuable lens to use to understand and make sense of lived leisure experiences because it asks students, scholars, and activists to pay attention to understanding difference and ultimately to ask, "What difference does difference make?" (Kivel, 2000, p. 79).

To think intersectionally requires leisure students, scholars, and practitioners to *recognize* difference and meaningfully *engage* with and *think about* difference (Watson & Scraton, 2013). We need to think critically about leisure, how we conceptualize leisure, how power is part of leisure, how we design leisure opportunities, and how we take action and work for change. Leisure spaces in particular necessitate thinking intersectionally. As Watson and Scraton (2013) noted,

> Leisure suits an intersectional approach because more often than not, leisure is an outcome or result of negotiations of a range of interrelated factors. Leisure is multi-layered and multiplicitous, occurring in ways that can reproduce and also challenge binaries of public/private, active/passive and freedom/constraint. (p. 45)

If we look at #Gamergate through an intersectional lens, it reveals how, in addition to sexism, many #Gamergate supporters promoted racism and homophobia in their posts on platforms such as Reddit, Twitter, Internet Relay Chat, 4Chan, and 8Chan.

While feminist leisure research has illustrated possibilities for negotiating constraints, it is important to note that "constraints do not exist in isolation from other aspects of people's lives" (Samdahl, 2013, p. 117). As such, it is important that leisure scholars, students, and professionals also consider the social and cultural factors that place leisure constraints in the way in the first place (Samdahl, 2013), in particular, the ways leisure can be constraining (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1994). Berbary (2013) suggested that to better understand the ways leisure constraints are gendered, leisure scholars need to "move from focusing solely on the individual to focusing on specific leisure spaces and the relationships between that space,

individuals, discursive discipline, and cultural discourse" (p. 164). Based on this suggestion, we next consider politics as part of the construction of leisure.

#3: No Leisure Space is Apolitical: We are Reproducing and Resisting Sexism in All Leisure Spaces

All leisure spaces are political, whether we like it or not. Politics can be understood as "plays of power in the distribution of resources" (Rose et al., 2018, p. 649), and the politics of leisure are present at all levels: from the participants, to the organizers, to the professionals who drive sport and encourage amateur participation. Leisure spaces can be a site where gendered expectations and stereotypes (as well as other politics) can be *reproduced*; they can also be a site where gendered expectations, stereotypes, and discourses can be *resisted*, normalizing new possibilities for performing gender. In this way, leisure becomes a social arena where power can be challenged, gained, maintained, diminished, and/or lost (Shaw, 2001). Therefore, the decisions that we, as leisure providers and organizations, make are political with real ramifications to either support or challenge the status quo. Statements such as "I try not to be political," "I don't want politics to get involved in this," and "It's just about fun, can't we just have fun and not be political?" are not practical—politics are already present whether or not we notice. In fact, whenever something seems "innocent," "free of politics," or "neutral," it always requires closer inspection.

When we think about leisure reproducing or resisting the politics of gender, we can open up discussion about leisure activities and political processes (Shaw, 2001). As an illustration, consider the popular, and seemingly innocent, U.S. cultural leisure phenomenon of the gender reveal party (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3
Gender Reveal Party

Note. Photo by A. Hussein, 2019, Pexels (https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-and-woman-standing-on-seashore-2685039/).

At a gender reveal party, the *sex* of an unborn child is revealed through some sort of medium (cutting a cake; popping a balloon; confetti poppers; and the most infamous, a pyrotechnic device emitting colored smoke, which started a massive California wildfire in 2020) that uncovers either the color pink or the color blue. This seemingly simple leisure event has deep political implications:

1. First, this is a *sex* reveal, not a gender reveal. As noted, gender is socially constructed and fluid, so this language is problematic because it asserts that gender and sex are the same and that they exist as a binary. Many children (some estimate as frequent as 1 in 100) are born with either a chromosomal makeup or a genital makeup (Ernst et al., 2018) that does not align fully with "male" or "female" labels (e.g., intersex or difference of sexual development).

2. Sex is revealed through gender normative colors: Boy = blue and girl = pink. In doing this, we are "pinking" and "blueing" a child before they are born. Family and friends of the parent(s) get the baby gifts that begin to discipline the child (and parents) into performing gender in the "correct" way: dresses, pink, and dolls for girls and trucks, balls, and blue for boys. In the process, children are met with a whole host of gender identity expectations meant to keep them within traditional sex roles (see Act Like a Lady/Man Activity in Schultz et al., 2020).

3. The reveal often elicits extreme reactions (both positive and negative), especially from fathers. These reactions are tied to expectations about gendered upbringing and performance, as well as parenting a boy or a girl.

4. The gender reveal party (and subsequent baby showers) reinforces the idea that a woman's value is in giving birth to children, as we do not hold cultural celebrations to celebrate a woman's choice not to have children, or to get sterilized, or to stay single.

5. In response to the growing trend in gender reveal parties, transgender reveal parties and self-gender reveal parties (gender reveal parties for adults instead of unborn babies) have grown in popularity and can be a way to resist and re-create gender norms.

Some or all of these elements are present in every gender reveal party. What seems like an innocent party with some specific color is actually deeply political—every time.

For another example of the ways leisure spaces can be used to both reproduce and resist gendered power relations, consider how media shapes understandings of gender for children. Play is used to socialize children into performing specific gender roles at a very young age. Children learn what roles they are "supposed" to play and how they are supposed to play with their toys through TV, movies, advertising, and the people around them including family, teachers, care workers, and other children. Think about a child with Disney *Frozen* action figures "playing" Elsa and Anna; their imagination is shaped by the movie and they often reenact the script of the movie. Much of this play instills ideals about traditional femininity, masculinity, and power, as those ideals are presented in the movie.

Baker-Sperry and Gauerholz (2002) considered gendered messages in children's stories, looking more specifically at the ways the feminine beauty ideal has been represented in Grimms' fairy tales over time. They described the feminine beauty ideal as "the socially constructed notion that physical attractiveness is one of women's most important assets, and something all women should strive to achieve and maintain" (p. 711). In their study, they

found that fairy tales that have persisted and been reproduced most often (i.e., Cinderella and Snow White) promote the importance of the feminine beauty ideal and do so in powerful ways by linking feminine beauty with goodness (e.g., in Snow White the evil stepmother is not the fairest of them all) and rewards (e.g., in Cinderella, Cinderella is rewarded for her hard work by marrying the prince).

Men and boys are not exempt from body standards in fairy tales. Along with being big, strong, and handsome, male characters in fairy tales have been cast in positive traditional roles (e.g., a prince) or in traditionally masculine roles (e.g., the woodsman; Jorgensen, 2018). These layers of masculine representation create the same types of expectations as the feminine beauty ideal does about properly performing gender.

Most interestingly, Baker-Sperry and Gauerholz (2002) found that fairy tales most commonly reproduced in the second half of the 20th century make more references to women's beauty and men's handsomeness (although they note the pervasiveness of these messages differs for women and men—messages about the value of beauty for women are more frequent). Although the authors were unable to explain from their research the ways that gender ideals were taken up and internalized, the number of references and their in-your-face nature are significant (Baker-Sperry & Gauerholz, 2002).

As media consumers—and as parents, supervisors, and leisure providers for youth—we must examine messages reproduced by media in leisure spaces. We need to understand the power dynamics and politics of these messages—which is not an easy feat. "The influence of all this media is systematic and affects how we think and feel in ways we don't always recognize, even—sometimes especially—when we consider ourselves immune" (Pozner, 2010, p. 21). Although media and media messages can be hard to think critically about, Berbary and Richmond (2011) asked, "What happens when we step back and examine the messages that we have come to trust as universal truths?" (p. 194).

As consumers of media, we can use tests such as the Bechdel test (also known as the Bechdel–Wallace test) to critically assess the representation of women in film. To pass the Bechdel test, a film must

1. Have at least two [named] women in it
2. Who talk to each other
3. About something other than a man (https://bechdeltest.com/)

Surprisingly few films pass the Bechdel test.

In addition to asking deconstructing questions, we can find other ways to resist dominant messages. For instance, Berbary and Richmond (2011) noted that parents can choose to offer children books to read that include diverse messages and characters. They explained, "By offering children multiple perspectives and examples of gendered possibilities we help to decrease stigma, increase understanding, and encourage inclusive leisure spaces" (p. 207). When consuming media with children, parents can choose to challenge and/or rewrite the messages in different media scripts and encourage children to do the same (Baker-Sperry & Gauerholz, 2002). For an activity that both adults and children can do together to think through gendered media messages, see Jonathan McIntosh's Gendered Advertising Remixer activity in Schultz et al., 2020. Finally, Johnson and Dunlap (2011) contended critical media programs need to be more fully integrated into school curriculums. This would help youth interrogate dominant narratives of masculinity and sexuality reproduced through media, and encourage youth to create counternarratives. As leisure professionals, we have a responsibility

to understand the politics behind individual and institutional choices and how these work to reinforce and/or resist systems of sexism.

#4: As Leisure Professionals, We Are Responsible for What Sort of Culture We Curate in Our Spaces

If #Gamergate taught the gaming world one thing, it was, "When you decline to create or to curate a culture in your spaces, you're responsible for what spawns in the vacuum" (Alexander, 2014, para. 10). Like video game developers and studios, leisure professionals are a part of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). At the heart of what we do is designing experiences for others. Think about designing any sort of festival (whether for a community recreation center, a national park, or a brewery). A good designer thinks about how bodies will move in the space (parking, ticket booth locations, gate locations, where people will stand/sit, restrooms); what they will be doing; what types of interactions will be encouraged (discouraged); who will be included (pricing, transportation, location, marketing); and what the space will look like, smell like, taste like, and so forth. This process is similar to designing a virtual world in a video game, with limits to what characters and settings will look like and their interactions. If we do not intentionally plan our public programs to include *all genders* in our spaces, we are responsible for what is created in the void that we leave. This does not mean that all events need to be programmed for all genders; indeed, there can be real value in women-only (for example) events. However, when events are intended to cater to the public, which includes all genders, we need to make *intentional* decisions to ensure that the experience is designed to work for, and *actively include*, all genders.

An intersectional example highlighting the failure to curate an inclusive leisure space is shown in Layland et al.'s (2018) study of the augmented reality game *Pokémon Go*. Many of the PokéStops, where participants had to go to play the game, were in White neighborhoods. Stops are placed using Google Maps data and landmarks, and since we know that the allocation of community resources and the placement of landmarks are racialized and have leisure implications (see Chapter 10), players from well-resourced neighborhoods and of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to succeed. These spaces are also not welcoming to Black people due to racism. Additionally, Black women's gender identity made them experience leisure constraints because of safety. Women playing the game alone in some of the designated "stops" reported sexual assault and harassment. Designing the game so that stops would be better distributed across diverse neighborhoods is one example (among others) of how the game could work to curate a culture of inclusivity.

This lesson ends with things to think about as you curate inclusive leisure, recreation, sport, and tourism spaces. These focus on organizational tasks, because we believe that only once an organization has taken an introspective look and worked to pay more attention to gender justice (and other forms of social justice) can and will they curate truly positive leisure spaces for their participants.

1. Train staff on gender inclusivity, to spot and call out sexism, and (importantly) to use gender-inclusive language.

2. Review all of your training materials, websites, social media pages and feeds, marketing materials, guides, forms, and any other programmatic content for sexist language, illustrations, and gender stereotypes. Change or remove items that are not up to standards.

3. Review all of your policies for sexism. It is sometimes helpful to hire an outside group to do this or to give an official "gender equity group" the authority and resources to do so.

4. Make sure you have a clear policy on workplace sexual harassment and assault and an expeditious and clear path to report and remedy any incidents. Ensure that everyone knows this policy.

5. Ensure women are being paid the same as their male counterparts.

6. Ensure that *all* restrooms at your office and at any events have a baby changing station.

7. Ensure parental leave policies are inclusive of both parents (it is in some countries but not in others such as the United States) including same-sex couples.

8. Ensure women on your team are not assigned "service" or "social" roles more than men or by default.

9. Examine your marketing campaigns. Who are they targeting? How are men, women, and nonbinary people being represented in your ads (body size, what are they doing, with whom, etc.)?

10. "Representation-review" your organizational structure. Who is in power? Be intentional about making sure people who hold power in your organization have diverse representations. Are there women? Nonbinary people? Diverse races? Diverse backgrounds? Is this diversity across all levels of leadership and structures of power?

11. "Promote the broadcasting and coverage by the media, especially public media, of women's cultural and sports events on an equal footing as men's, and publicly celebrate women's achievements. Give visibility and promote positive role models of women and men, girls and boys, who participate in sports where they are under-represented." (Council of Europe, 2019, § II.H.6)

12. "Promote and conduct regular awareness-raising campaigns on the construction of femininities and masculinities and what it means to be a woman/girl and a man/boy in contemporary society, for example through media, free public lectures and discussions." (Council of Europe, 2019, § I.B.8)

Conclusion

"What we still haven't learned from #Gamergate: #Gamergate should have armed us against bad actors and bad-faith arguments. It didn't."
—Romano (2020, Headline)

As seen in this 2020 headline (Romano, 2020), #Gamergate continues to represent the cultural moment around traditional roles and who gets to be where in society. It provided a template, both in how the movement tried to make things happen and in the lack of law enforcement response, to some of the revitalized movements in 2021, including hate, white supremacy, racism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia.

But #Gamergate, crucially, was not just about gender. It was not, contrary to its name, even about video games. At its heart, the so-called "movement" (if an ambiguous hashtag with no leaders and no articulated goals can be called a movement) was always about how we define our shared cultural spaces, how we delineate identity, and who is and is not allowed

to have a voice in mainstream culture. It was about that tension between tradition and inclusion—and in that regard, #Gamergate may be the perfect representation of our times (Dewey, 2014).

Discussion Questions

The big questions Dewey (2014) posed are also core questions that students and professionals should ask themselves as they work with the public to plan and implement recreation activities and programs. Modifying Ip's (2014) #Gamergate questioning, we encourage you to critically assess your programming or events using the following questions. Revisit these regularly as you plan, implement, and evaluate gender-inclusive services:

1. What counts as a legitimate _____ (game, trail, park, group, league)? (How we think about these things is embedded in our own experiences with the world and our own situation. We owe it to others, as leisure professionals, to think critically about what legitimacy means and how our decisions impact others.)

2. Who gets to be a(n) _____ (hiker, player, visitor, artist, team member)? (Remember that leisure activities often define [a portion of] a person's identity, so deciding who gets to play or define themselves in a certain way is a powerful move that can make a community more [or less] equitable.)

3. Whose bodies get to occupy this space? (Women's bodies? Will lactating bodies be allowed? Cisgender bodies only? Black bodies? Able bodies only?) and how will we indicate that those bodies are welcome? (Restrooms? Facilities? Signs? Types of uniforms [will our visitor's center uniforms look like police uniforms]? Representation…will participants see people who look like them working for and playing with them?)

4. Which stakeholders get to define these terms? (As Ip, 2014, stated, access is at the center of a culture war; the culture holding power often gets to decide the answers to the three questions above. When answering this question, it is important to first ask yourself,
   a. "Historically, which stakeholders have defined these terms?"
   b. "Whose voices do those stakeholders represent?"
   c. "Whose voices are not being heard?")

Additional Resources

Books on the Negative Consequences of "Pink Socialization"

Eliot, L. (2010) *Pink brain, blue brain: How small differences grow into troublesome gaps—and what we can do about it*. Mariner Books.

Fine, C. (2011). *Delusions of gender: How our minds, society, and neurosexism create difference*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Paoletti, J. (2012). *Pink and blue: Telling the boys from the girls in America*. Indiana University Press.

Peril, L. (2002). *Pink think: Becoming a woman in many uneasy lessons*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Orenstein, P. (2012). *Cinderella ate my daughter*. Harper.

Feminist Leisure Studies Books

Freysinger, V. J., Shaw, S. M., Henderson, K. A., & Bialeschki, M. D. (Eds.). (2013). *Leisure, women, and gender*. Venture Publishing.

Parry, D. C. (Ed.). (2019). *Feminisms in leisure studies: Advancing a fourth wave*. Routledge.

Readings on Masculinity

Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). University of California Press.

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Horowitz, R. (2013). *Boys and their toys: Masculinity, class and technology in America*. Routledge.

Johnson, C. W., & Cousineau, L. S. (2018). Manning up and manning on: Masculinities, hegemonic masculinity, and leisure studies. In D. C. Parry (Ed.), *Feminisms in leisure studies: Advancing a fourth wave* (pp. 126–148). Routledge.

Nontext Resources

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity. (n.d.). *Gender equity self-assessment tool: Community sport and physical activity providers*. Canadian Women and Sport. https://womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GE_Assessment_Community_Eng.pdf

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Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2020, August 5). *The lift - What is the gender pay gap* [Video]. Commonwealth Government of Australia. https://www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news/this-is-why-you-should-care-about-the-gender-pay-gap

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Alexander, L. (2014). *'Gamers' don't have to be your audience. 'Gamers' are over*. Gamasutra. https://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/224400/Gamers_dont_have_to_be_your_audience_Gamers_are_over.php

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