

CANADIAN-BASED RESEARCH ON LEISURE AND ETHNICITY: CURRENT STATE OF CONDITION

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Introduction

In the 1970s, research by Malpass (1973) helped lay the foundation for the expansion of Canadian-based research on leisure and ethnicity. Malpass's research was introduced at the latter part of the European immigration thrust to Canada and was probably influenced by a recognition of the needs of immigrants from Europe. In fact, early Canadian-based research on leisure and ethnicity centered largely on the recreation participation needs of European immigrants (Karlis, 1990). However, since the early 1990s, Canadian-based research on leisure and ethnicity has expanded and the focus has broadened to include an understanding of the leisure needs and participation patterns of ethnic groups beyond those of European backgrounds (see Tirone, 1999/2000; Bolla, Dawson, and Karlis, 1991; and, Bolla and Dawson, 1990;). However, this expansion has been slow as little Canadian-based research has been conducted on leisure and ethnicity (Karlis, 2004).

Today, more so than ever, it is important to expand research on leisure and ethnicity as immigration in Canada is the highest it has been in seventy years (Statistics Canada, 2003). The face of immigration in Canada has changed as many new immigrants now come from Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as the United States. For future research on leisure and ethnicity in Canada this means that emphasis will have to be placed on the leisure needs and participation patterns of ethnic groups beyond those from Europe to include those from other parts of the world as well.

The purpose of this study is to examine the current state of condition of Canadian-based research on leisure and ethnicity. More specifically, the intent of this study is to provide a detailed overview of Canadian-based research conducted to date on leisure and ethnicity while also making suggestions for the direction of future Canadian-based research in this area. The objectives of this study are to: (1) overview the purpose of existing studies on leisure and ethnicity published in Canadian-based leisure studies journals (i.e., *Leisure/Loisir*, *Society and Leisure*, the *Journal of Leisurability*, and *Parks and Recreation Canada*) from the 1970s to the present, (2) identify the purpose of existing studies on leisure and ethnicity published in Canadian-based journals outside of leisure studies (i.e., *Canadian Ethnic Studies*) from the 1970s to the present, and (3) provide suggestions for the direction of future Canadian-based research on leisure and ethnicity.

Methodology

An exhaustive review of secondary research published in Canadian-based leisure studies and non-leisure studies journals from the 1970s to today was conducted. Once this extensive literature review had been conducted, emphasis was placed on identifying the "focus", "purpose" and "type of research" of each article reviewed. "Focus" was operationalized to consist of the ethnic groups or ethnic sub-groups (i.e., youth, aged) examined within each article reviewed. The "purpose" reflects the stated objectives of

each article reviewed. Whereas, “type of research” refers to the research approach employed (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, conceptual, theoretical) in each article reviewed.

Results

Preliminary results indicate that Canadian-based literature on leisure and ethnicity: (1) focuses on a selected few ethnic groups, (2) concentrates on sub-groups within ethnic groups such as youth, seniors, immigrants, and children of immigrants, (3) describes the leisure and recreation attitudes and preferences of an ethnic group or sub-population within the ethnic group, (4) depicts the leisure and recreation activity participation patterns of members of an ethnic group, (5) overviews the availability of recreation resources available for specific ethnic groups, and (6) explores the relationship between ethno-specific recreation involvement and the maintenance of ethnic cultural identity in multicultural societies.

This paper concludes with the following five suggestions for the direction of future Canadian-based research on leisure and ethnicity: (1) expand research to include a focus on Canada’s new generation of immigrants coming from Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as the United States, (2) examine the recreation needs and behaviors of sub-groups within ethnic groups that have been overlooked in the past (i.e., third and fourth generation descendants), (3) explore the impact of multiculturalism policies on ethno-specific and non-ethno specific recreation pursuits, (4) conduct applied research and case studies of the recreation centers and communities of ethnic groups, and (5) utilize qualitative approaches that have been scantily used in Canadian-based leisure research to explore the relationship between recreation behavior and cultural identity.

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