

## LEISURE SCHOLARS AS HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES?

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**ABSTRACT:** Leisure as a human right has been incorporated into numerous international conventions and declarations beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Currently over 25 declarations, conventions and/or covenants created by a variety of international and regional organisations identify leisure as a human right. While there is a clear global consensus concerning leisure as a human right, there remain numerous challenges. Fulfilling the right to leisure is not only a challenge at an individual, community and national level but also for scholars working within the field of leisure. What of the role of leisure studies scholars regarding leisure as a human right? While some leisure studies researchers have explored aspects related to leisure and human rights, this has been limited (VEAL, 2015). To ensure leisure is advanced as a human right requires the support, actions and advocacy of all involved in leisure studies. There is a need for collective action to be taken to champion leisure as a human right, through research as well as advocacy leadership. This paper reviews the issue of scholarly advocacy as well as identifies potential strategies leisure studies scholars could adopt to advocate for human rights.

**Keywords:** Human rights. Leisure. Advocacy. Collective Action.

### Introduction

LEISURE IS A HUMAN RIGHT...This is not disputed. 192 member states of the United Nations are currently signatories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Within this globally accepted document, leisure as a human right can be directly linked to three Articles. Article 24 states 'Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay', Article 13 (1) states 'Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state', Article 13 (2) states 'Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his[sic] own, and to return to his[sic] country' and Article 27 (1) states 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits' (UNITED NATIONS, 2021). In addition, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), in particular Article 1 'right to social and cultural development', Article 7(d) 'right to rest, leisure and periodic holidays with pay', Article 15(1a) 'right to take part in cultural life', and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), in particular Article 1 'right to social and cultural development', Article 12 'right to liberty of movement', Article 19 'right to freedom of expression', Article 21 'right of peaceful assembly', Article 22 'right to freedom of association with others', further

reinforce the global acceptance of leisure as a human right.

Further to these broad declarations there are a number of specific United Nations conventions/declarations identifying leisure as a human right, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989), the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (1999), the Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) and the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Regional declarations and charters, such as the European Social Charter (1961), the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), the 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, the Social Charter of the Americas (2012) and the Association of South-East Asian Nations Human Rights Declaration (2012), also contain references to various aspects aligned to leisure as a human right. An exploration of nation state constitutions using data from the Comparative Constitutions Project (ELKINS, GINSBURG & MELTON, 2014) indicates 161 countries have included human rights references to aspects related to leisure (such as right to rest and leisure and rights concerning freedom of movement and freedom of expression). Overall, it is clear leisure as a human right is accepted globally.

However, the right to leisure faces a number of challenges, from global issues (such as climate change and the recent COVID-19 pandemic) through to nation state's political machinations. Not only are these challenges represented at an individual, community and national level but also for scholars working within the field of leisure. While some leisure studies researchers have explored aspects related to leisure and human rights, this has been limited, with Veal (2015) arguing that leisure scholars have overlooked human rights as a field of study. Most recently Darcy (2019) lamented the lack of engagement by leisure scholars concerning human rights and leisure, particularly in relation to disability. This discussion paper puts forward an argument that leisure scholars, both individually and collectively, need to reflect on their role in relation to advancing and advocating for leisure as a human right.

It is pertinent at this point to reveal both myself and my position in regard to the issue of leisure scholars as advocates. I have been actively involved as a leisure scholar since 2002, initially through my research studies and working as a research assistant to more recently as a tenured academic at an Australian university. My research and teaching have primarily focused on topics related to social justice, equity, and inclusion. As an applied sociologist focused on aspects linking leisure to public health and health promotion, I have sought to provide some voice through my work for those who have limited opportunities to be recognised (whether that be in relation to inclusive community recreation for people with impairments through to supporting the creative arts sector as a valued industry in a sport

obsessed nation). As such I view academic scholars have a role as advocates.

The focus of leisure scholars as human rights advocates has become an area I have more actively been pursuing in recent years, particularly in relation to developing a collaborative approach. In 2018 I was invited to attend a panel discussion session for the Leisure and Recreation Association of South Africa International Congress held in Durban. This paper is based on key aspects of that panel session presentation. In 2020, during the height of both the COVID-19 global pandemic and Black Lives Matters protests occurring in numerous countries (including my own) I was involved with developing and promoting an Anti-Racism Charge (AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE STUDIES, 2020) initiated Professor Rasul Mowatt (for The Academy of Leisure Sciences (TALS)) and supported by the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies (ANZALS), the Canadian Association for Leisure Studies (CALs), the UK Leisure Studies Association (LSA), the Leisure and Recreation Association of South Africa (LARASA), the World Leisure Organization (WLO), the Association for Event Management Education (AEME), and the Academy of Leisure Sciences Africa (ALSA). While I have developed a position that leisure scholars have a role as advocates, I'm also mindful that this is not always supported (or encouraged) by other academics or tertiary institutions or even broader sections of society (for examples governments or specific industries). I am also aware that I am privileged in regard to adopting this position. As a middle-aged white male, working as a tenured academic in a developed nation I have opportunities and power that many others within academia (as well as in the general community) do not have access to. While this is the case, I also feel that there is a need for those in privileged positions to reach out, as well as support and give voice (and space) to those who have less power. The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, I am seeking, through discussions within this paper, to reach out to others who may be lamenting the lack of human rights advocacy within leisure studies to be heartened to know they are not alone. Secondly, I hope to add to the limited scholarly leisure studies literature concerning the role of academic as human rights advocates.

This paper begins by reviewing arguments concerning academics as advocates, highlighting the ongoing contested nature of the topic in a number of fields as well as the lack of discussion by leisure scholars. Next, this paper discusses two broad topics (these being climate change and globalisation) to draw out some key concerns related to leisure as a human right, whilst weaving through advocacy positions leisure scholars have adopted as well as identifying further advocacy options. This paper then discusses issues leisure scholars may need to contend with in relation to adopting an advocacy role, and finally, some strategies are presented to support leisure scholars adoption of an advocacy role, both individually as well as collectively.

### Advocacy and scholars

The term 'advocacy' essentially refers to the act of supporting a specific cause, with this cause being deemed important by the advocate (NELSON; VUCETICH 2009). To be an advocate requires adopting a particular position concerning a topic. Adopting a particular position concerning a topic is underpinned by a value system, that is a set of preferential criteria that direct action (WILLIAMS JR., 1979). As such, value systems are inherently embedded within an individual's or groups cultural norms. A core value system embedded within a large proportion of academic scholarship is the need for objectivity. As Daston and Galison (2021, p.17) point out,

[t]o be objective is to aspire to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower – knowledge unmarked by prejudice or skill, fantasy or judgement, wishing or striving. Objectivity is blind sight, seeing without inference, interpretation, or intelligence.

As such, the requirement for academic scholarship to be objective conflicts with adopting an advocacy position (which is subjective). However, as Nelson and Vucetich (2009) point out the degree of conflict can range from mild, that is scholars may be justified to advocate on some occasions, through to severe whereby scholars should never advocate. What appears to be consistent in regard to whether scholars should or should not advocate is that there seems to be no moral obligation to advocate.

Aligned with the need for scholars to be objective is the need to be viewed as neutral and impartial (NELSON; VUCETICH, 2009). Research findings should be presented as facts or information. Knowledge is drawn from conclusions only when there is relatively high degree of certainty. Personal views or values should not underpin academic knowledge as this reduces the credibility of knowledge. Adopting an impartial position within academic scholarship reduces perceptions concerning conflict of interest (JONES, 2007).

The idea that adopting an advocacy position overrides objectivity and impartiality as key cornerstones of academic scholarship has been consistently challenged. Scholars aligned within critical theory and criticalist epistemological thinking have been arguing for decades that there is a need to move academic research beyond positivist, taken for granted assumptions (WILLIAMS, 2001). Those aligned within a critical epistemology focus on knowledge that is subjective and underpinned by personal and professional socio-historical processes. Criticalist scholars accept knowledge is far from being value-free or universally true (LATHER, 2004). Scholars within fields such as gender, race and disability studies often align within critical epistemologies. But what of leisure studies? Rose, Harmon and Dunlap (2018) point out that while there have been some scholars who have explored leisure studies topics within a critical epistemology, this has been uneven and irregular. Many critical scholars argue that at a time when inequality and injustice is affecting the human rights of so many people around the globe adopting a stance that does not challenge

the status quo is essentially supporting inequality (NELSON; VUCETICH 2009; ROSE, HARMON; DUNLAP, 2018). As Fox (2011, p.185) states

Traditional leisure literature says little about challenging social standards and practices that are oppressive, working creatively and meaningfully with trauma and violence, negotiating a world riddled with racism and oppression, or creating meaningful solitary leisures. It lacks a voice grounded in critical theory and cognizant of the diversity of leisures.

As has been noted, there have been some leisure scholars who have adopted an advocacy role however this has tended to focus on individual population groups (for example people with impairments, older people, athletes), with very limited links to human rights as an underpinning position. The next section of this paper discusses two broad topics to draw out some key concerns related to leisure as a human right, whilst weaving through advocacy positions leisure scholars have adopted as well as identifying further advocacy options.

### Climate change and leisure

Climate change has become the greatest global existential challenge (INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE - IPCC, 2018). The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have identified a number of systemic and potentially irreversible effects of climate change on the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and societies and global and national economies, as well as cultures (IPCC, 2018). The IPCC have indicated global average warming, rising sea levels and higher frequency and severity of natural disasters (i.e. heat waves, drought and flooding) are clear indicators of the severity of climate change and are a portend for the future should action not be taken on a global level. These extreme weather events are having, and will continue to have, dire consequences for human health, particularly those living in low-income countries (RIFKIN, LONG & PERRY 2018; WATTS *et al.* 2018; WATTS *et al.* 2019) as well as the natural environment (AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, 2021; HALPIN, 1997; JENNINGS & HARRIS, 2017).

Connections between climate change and leisure has been both broad as well as myopic. In terms of breadth, leisure scholars have explored the impacts of climate change on various leisure activities including sport (DINGLE & STEWART, 2018; EDGAR, 2020; ORR, 2020), tourism (LENZEN *et al.* 2018; SCOTT, HALL & GÖSSLING, 2019; SCOTT, GÖSSLING & HALL 2012) and physical activity (BERNARD *et al.* 2021; OBRADOVICH & FOWLER, 2017). However, the main focus has been on the impact of the changing climate on the ability for individuals and groups to continue to undertake their leisure activities. While some leisure scholars have explored the impact of leisure on the environment (refs), this had been a focus for decades and while discussion can be viewed as being aligned

with aspects related to climate change (for example natural habitat degradation by hikers (ref)) this is rarely located within broader climate change issues.

To date, links between climate change, leisure and human rights have been very limited. With rising sea levels and increasing natural disasters occurring across the world, few leisure scholars have explored or discussed the role of wealthier nations to support island communities' access to leisure. Also, there has been very limited attention from leisure scholars in relation to the cost of climate change mitigation requirements to enable leisure opportunities to occur for low-income individuals, communities, or nations. While there has been some discussion in regard to shifting from a reliance on fossil fuels for transport (usually couched as an adoption of active transport (RISSEL, 2009)), this has tended (again) to not take into account the inability access/equity issues for some individuals or communities, for example being able to 'walk/cycle to work' is not possible for people on low incomes who are required to travel long distance for work.

### Globalisation and leisure

Globalisation is a generic term used to describe the increase internationalisation of markets of goods and services, as well as the means of production (BEST, 2009). In 1998 the World Leisure and Recreation Association (now the World Leisure Organisation) released the Sao Paulo Declaration (ROJEK; CASTILHO, 2018) The focus of this declaration through the 10 Articles was in response to a perception that globalisation (and cosmopolitanism) needed to take into account leisure as a global concept. As Article 1 states: 'All persons have the right to leisure through economic, political and social policies that are equitable and sustainable'. Rojek and Castilho (2018) indicate the remaining nine Articles could be subsumed into three main themes, these being Inclusion, Rights and Order. The World Leisure and Recreation Association sought the United Nations, governments and non-government organisations as well as all citizens of the world to support and promote the declaration. Rojek and Castilho (2018) argue that while the declaration promotes an idealistic commitment to 'leisure rights for all' and does recognise some facets of globalisation as being detrimental to leisure, it fails to acknowledge or accept globalisation does not universally enrich all. While this declaration has been in existence for more than 20 years, it is interesting to note that very few leisure scholars refer to it or cite it in relation to undertaking leisure research.

Leisure literature concerning globalisation has tended to focus on two broad fields, tourism and sport (ROJEK; CASTILHO, 2018; ROSE, 2006). As Bull, Hoose and Weed (2003, p.120) point out,

The growth in tourism is part of the process of globalisation, which involves markets, trade, labour relations and culture itself attaining global

dimensions, in that the forms of organisation that connect them have a global character... As a result, the influence of nation states has declined and multinational companies and international organisations have come to acquire increasing power and influence.

In respect to tourism and globalisation, scholars have focused on topics related to First Nations (or local inhabitant) people's exploitation by multi-national companies, particularly in relation to dispossession of land, worker rights and cultural exploitation (BULL; HOOSE; WEED 2003; COLE; ERIKSSON, 2010; HIGGINS-DESBIOLLES, 2020).

Some of the leisure/tourism literature concerning the impact of globalisation on local communities interweaves with concerns regarding environmental impact and climate change (SCOTT; HALL; GOSLING, 2012.), though very little explore wider issues related to human rights, particularly in relation to equity, fairness and social justice (BRAMWELL; LANE 2008; HIGGINS-DESBIOLLES; WHYTE, 2015; HIGGINS-DESBIOLLES *et al.* 2019).

While some leisure scholars have explored the impact of globalisation on tourism, others have explored it in relation to sport. As Bull, Hoos and Weed (2003, p.120) point out, sport has become 'a global phenomenon affected by the emergence of a world media system, especially television, the ease with which goods, services and people can move around the world, and corporate capitalism'.

In relation to globalisation and sport within a human rights perspective, a majority of the focus has been in relation to athletes and mega-events (such as the Olympic Games) (CAUDWELL; MCGEE, 2018). In regard to athletes, leisure scholars have tended to focus on elite athletes (MAGUIRE, 2008; SIMIYU NJORORAI, 2010; THIBAUT, 2009), most notably in relation to labour migration. Discussions regarding human rights aspects related to young athletes being encouraged (or enticed) from South/Central America and Africa to sports clubs based in Europe or America has received some attention, mainly focusing on the health and wellbeing of the athletes after they arrive in the host nation (THIBAUT, 2009, 2018).

Scholars exploring aspects related to sporting mega-events, globalisation and human rights have tended to be aligned with areas covered by those exploring tourism, in particular land dispossession and worker rights (CAUDWELL; MCGEE, 2018; HORNE, 2018; SUZUKI; OGAWA; INABA, 2018). While there is some literature concerning the environmental impact of sporting meg-events (KELLISON; CASPER 2017), to date there has been very limited exploration concerning links between sporting mega-events, globalisation, environmental impact and human rights.

Aligned with mainstream sport, particularly elite sport and mega-events, receiving some attention from leisure scholars in relation to globalisation and human rights another more recent perspective concerning sport has also been a focus, this being sport for development (sometimes referred to as sport for development and peace). Sport for development, as a field, has been evolving for a number of decades and has tended to

focus on the use of sport for social and community development (COALTER, 2013). Kidd (2008, p.371) points out that while using sport for social development purposes has a history dating back to the late nineteenth century, 'the rapid explosion of the agencies and organizations that are involved, the tremendous appeal it has for youth volunteering, the financial support it enjoys from the powerful international sports federations, and the extent to which it has been championed by the United Nations, its agencies and significant partners' has been profound and unprecedented. Essentially the sport-for-development has become a globalised field.

Academic literature concerning sport-for-development has been growing over the past two decades, with Schulenkorf, Sherry and Rowe (2016) noting that an overwhelming majority of sport-for-development studies have been conducted by scholars located in North America, Europe, and Australia on projects and programs delivered in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The vast majority of sport-for-development literature has tended to focus on evaluating program outcomes at the community or individual level (SCHULENKORF; SHERRY; ROWE, 2016), with positive youth development and developing social capital being the primary theoretical frameworks adopted by scholars. The review of sport-for-development literature by Schulenkorf, Sherry and Rowe (2016) clearly indicates a lack of attention to any human rights frameworks or approaches.

This lack of attention to a human rights approach in relation to sport-for-development literature has been identified by some over the past decade in relation to critiques of both sport-for-development as a field as well as research concerning sport-for-development (COALTER, 2010, 2013; DARNELL, 2010; DARNELL; HAYHURST, 2012; LEVERMORE, 2009; LINDSEY; GRATTAN, 2012). These critiques have focused on an overwhelming dominance of those implementing sport-for-development program and researchers coming from high-income countries delivering/evaluating programs in low- and middle-income countries, sometimes referred to as a "helicopter approach" (COALTER, 2013). It has been argued that the "helicopter approach" to sport-for-development could negatively impact the delivering and outcomes of programs, particularly in relation to community support and empowerment as well as the wider program sustainability (HAYHURST; FRISBY, 2010; SCHULENKORF; ADAIR, 2013).

### Leisure scholars as advocates

As has been shown in relation to the brief discussion concerning leisure scholars focusing on topics such as climate change and globalisation, there has been limited exploration of these topics from a human rights perspective. For those who have adopted a human rights perspective, this has tended to be used as a tool to critique specific topics, for example infringement of First Nations people's human rights and tourism (COLE;



ERIKSSON, 2010) or sport-for-development programs (COALTER, 2010). The question then becomes, are these scholars human rights advocates? Using human rights frameworks to critique societies could be viewed as a form of advocacy, that is arguing for change. Or are these scholars located within criticalist epistemologies, that is adopting a methodological paradigm to explore and unpack the status quo? Could those adopting a criticalist position be referred to as advocates?

Nelson and Vucetich (2009) argue that scholars have a social responsibility to be advocates, as they not only have an obligation to serve society (as many of them are supported in some way by public monies) but that the skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding scholars bring to topics should be used to advance societies for the betterment of all. Furthermore, scholars have power and privilege through their advanced status bestowed upon them by societies. This social standing requires scholars to utilise their position to advocate.

It should be noted that, as with any aspect of professional life, there can be costs associated with taking any form of action, particularly in relation to advocacy. The current environment within which scholars are employed does not take into account any form of advocacy as an aspect of academic labour. As Boncori, Sicca and Bizjak (2020, p.1) point out, academics are being managed and held accountable based 'on quantitative metrics regarding performance, budgets, human resource management and income generation'. Academic performance is based on student feedback as well as numbers of peer reviewed journal publications and grant submissions. Development of academic knowledge has become focused on vocationalism and its use within market-based workplaces (OLSEN; PETERS, 2005). The academic workplace has also become casualised as 'universities turn towards more corporate management models, they increasingly use and exploit cheap faculty labor' (GIROUX, 2014, p.20). Insecure academic employment has become the norm across the globe (TIGHT, 2019), with increasing pressures to "perform" resulting in workplace stress, increasing workloads, and poor morale (TABERNER, 2018). External barriers have also arisen in recent years in relation to academics adopting an advocacy role, these being the increasing competition for funding (EDWARDS; ROY, 2017) as well as the anti-intellectualism/science movement that has taken hold in many nations (MERKLEY, 2020; REYES, 2020).

While changes within the academic environment can be viewed as a disincentive to adopt any form of advocacy, there has also been some resistance within academia to many of the previously cited barriers (MAHONY; WEINER 2019). For some scholars, conducting self or unfunded research has become a way to enable them to pursue studies and develop knowledge that is not directed or controlled by business or government interests (EDWARDS, 2020; FELDMAN; SANDOVAL, 2018; SMITH; DELAMONT, 2019), while others "carve out spaces" for themselves within their institutions that enable them to pursue scholarly activities that is of interest to them and enable them to 'practise with integrity'

(CLEGG, 2008, p.340).

### Adopting an advocacy role

As with most academic fields, leisure scholars often relate and/or align the focus of their study to broader debates in introductions and discussions of their papers. This can be viewed as a subtle form of advocacy; however advocacy is more than this. It requires moving beyond academic audiences to communicating findings and positions to a broader range of audiences, including the general public, the media and decision makers (FOOTE; KROGMAN; SPENCE, 2009). As was pointed out at the start of this paper, leisure is a human right. This is not in dispute. As such, leisure scholars should be advocating for leisure as a human right beyond the academy. However, there is very little guidance in relation to how to adopt an advocacy role, particularly within the leisure field. Drawing from Foote, Krogman and Spence (2009) this paper puts forward a number of key points through which scholars can structure academic advocacy.

### Positioning

Leisure scholars need to openly and consistently espouse their position and the values that underpin their advocacy of leisure as a human right. This needs to be more than indicating support within a brief paragraph of an academic paper. There is a need for leisure scholars to 'reveal' themselves both within their academic community as well as to those outside the academy. This also requires openly identifying one's epistemological positioning by explain how human rights problems are conceptualised by the leisure scholar. By doing so enables others to develop an understanding of the knowledge put forward by a leisure scholar aligns with arguments for actionable change. An example of a leisure scholar 'revealing' himself is the Critical Commentary piece by Darcy (2019). In this article Darcy not only reflects on his journey as a human rights advocate but also the underpinning experiences and positionings he has adopted throughout. The article itself was drawn from a keynote address by Darcy during the 2017 Australia and New Zealand Association of Leisure Studies conference held in Hobart Tasmania.

The opportunity for Darcy to 'reveal' himself as a human rights advocate within leisure studies in such an open way is (unfortunately) rare. There is a need within the leisure studies academy for more opportunities to be provided to scholars to 'present' their positionings. This could be through leisure studies journals putting out calls for short, reflective autobiographical articles encouraging established and emerging leisure scholars to briefly share their advocacy 'position'. These advocacy 'positioning' articles could then self-referenced in future papers by leisure scholars. This would not only reduce the number of times a leisure scholar would be required to 'reveal' themselves within papers but also

provide an opportunity for other scholars to 'align' themselves with colleagues in their own papers. Leisure studies organisations could also be involved using a similar call amongst their membership to then promote these biographical pieces via their websites and social media platforms. Leisure scholars themselves could utilise sections of their developed autobiographical work on their university staff websites. These advocacy 'positioning' statements could also form part of any media release concerning research findings.

In relation to research findings advocating for change, leisure scholars need to be aware that the general public and media may not be aware of the nuances embedded with academic research. Conversely, leisure scholars may not be fully aware of the socio-political environment in which research findings are positioned to advocate for change. The ability to translate academic knowledge and findings for the lay community can be challenging (FENNELL, 2021). Hardy, Vorobjovas-Pinta and Eccleston (2018) point out clear, coherent communication is the key issue in relation to academic knowledge translation, particularly in relation to advocating for change. Being able to 'speak the same language' is vital. This requires leisure scholars to position themselves with a variety of non-academic stakeholder groups, including government and non-government agencies as well as the media (both traditional and digital). Academic knowledge translation via digital and social media has been emerging as the newest frontier for scholars to embrace (BARTON; MEROLLI, 2019). Leisure scholars need to adopt a digital/social media position that can enable them to 'reach out' to the general community. This can be through the use of popular social media platforms (such as Twitter and Facebook) or trusted blogging/news platforms (for example leisure studies association websites) or for the more adventurous producing audio/video podcasts that could be disseminated via platforms such as Soundcloud or Spotify or YouTube.

### Transparency

Aligned with the need for leisure scholars to clearly articulate their positioning in relation to human rights advocacy is the need for transparency. While all scholars are required to attend to transparency in relation to university research ethics, transparency in regard to scholars as advocates extends this further. Leisure scholars advocating for human rights need to be transparent in relation to their level of expertise. Scholarly engagement needs to be predicated on academic findings and research synthesis. While leisure scholars can engage with debates outside their specific expertise as trained thinkers, they need to ensure they are transparent in relation to their level of knowledge concerning topics as well as being open to alternative positions and understandings. Essentially, leisure scholars as human rights advocates should be prepared to accept alternative propositions, both in regard to their field of expertise as well as other scholarly fields.

While there are some transparency processes in relation to attending to or

amending journal publication errors or omissions (TEIXEIRA DA SILVA, 2017), there is very little guidance for scholars advocating for change. Some have argued that there is a potential for scholars adopting an advocacy position to alter data or findings, selectively frame an argument, or produce errors through 'omission, logic, fact, or conflation' (FOOTE; KROGMAN; SPENCE, 2009, p.586). While this could occur, it could also be argued that these same unethical academic practices could arise from scholarly research funded by industry and/or governments (MACFARLANE, 2010). There is a need for all leisure scholars advocating for human rights to be transparent not only with how they conduct their research but also how they present and promote findings to both academic and non-academic audiences.

### Networking

Leisure scholar advocates need to network. As previously indicated, developing a clear and consistent position requires engaging with multiple stakeholders. While academic conferences, journal publications and digital academic networking platforms (such as ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Mendeley, Zotero, and CiteULike) can provide opportunities for scholars to connect, this remains highly insular (OVADIA, 2014; THELWALL; KOUSHA, 2014). Leisure scholar advocates need to move beyond academic networks. Darcy (2019) identifies how as an academic leisure scholar his involvement with industry linked research as well as being a member of community-based organisations can support communities and affect policy level change. It is clear from the Critical Commentary by Darcy (2019) that he has drawn from his academic research and knowledge, as well as personal experience, to influence public debate and to find solutions to issues faced by people with a disability in the community by actively networking and collaborating with a variety of stakeholders.

Networking and collaborating across various sectors can enable leisure scholar advocates to not only disseminate research evidence but also provides an opportunity to relocate academic teaching and learning beyond the confines of the university (FLOOD MARTIN; DREHER, 2013). Connell (2019) argues there is a need for university academics to move beyond the technical or professional training of graduates to one that also involves a cultural and civic purpose. Engaging with the general community, the media as well as government and non-government agencies can provide scholars with an opportunity to share not only their knowledge and research practices but also learn from others. The opportunity to provide civic educational engagement aligns with the eco-versity movement (ECO-VERSITIES, 2018) whereby academics, practitioners and community members come together to re-imagine the formal higher education system to develop knowledge and practice in an effort to 'transform the unsustainable and unjust economic, political and social systems/mindsets that dominate the planet'.

## Final points

Academic advocacy is rarely discussed openly amongst scholars. While a vast number of leisure scholars conduct studies exploring issues that infringe on various population groups' human rights much of this knowledge remains hidden from the general public, the media and decisionmakers. This is not to say there are no leisure scholars adopting advocacy roles or that leisure scholars are not seeking to find ways to advocate. The issue is that these advocacy voices are segregated and isolated. As a field, leisure studies is disparate and segmented (TOWER *et al.* 2018). Rarely do we speak as one. The challenges concerning leisure as a human right will not be overcome quickly or by a few advocates. It requires the efforts, actions, and support of all across leisure studies. This will require collaboration. Collaboration within and across leisure studies organisations. It will require collaboration between leisure studies scholars and other fields (for example environmental science or workplace relations).

There is a need for the leisure studies field to discuss and bring forward the voices of those who are powerless and the dispossessed, those whose human rights have been directly and indirectly affected by government policies. While there is a need for the leisure scholar community to develop, share and promote clear and unambiguous positions on various global challenges (for example climate change and sustainable leisure), there is a need to move beyond words. There is a need to adopt advocacy positions that inform and influence practice. Not just the practice of those in the leisure field but all. This cannot be achieved by the few. It requires leisure studies scholars to work with colleagues, their students, communities as well as government and non-government.

When drafting the Anti-Racism Charge (AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE STUDIES, 2020) issued by numerous leisure studies organisations in 2020, the starting point was not to put out another statement, another pledge, another plethora of well-intentioned words. It began by recognising the need to "out" injustices and to identify ways we, as leisure scholars both individually and collectively could 'change the ways that the world is reflected in our functioning'. This resulted in a Charge. A Charge to consistently include in all leisure studies forums opportunities to express and engage with disruptions to all forms of power and oppression. To reveal and acknowledge the 'voices of colour that have been articulating a knowledge levied against anti-Blackness, racism, xenophobia, historical discrimination, anti-capitalism, and settler colonialism' in all leisure scholar work, including teaching.

Leisure is a human right.

Having quality of life is untenable if we cannot live. With a moral imagination, we have a great deal of work to do to support taking back the commons. But individually and collectively, we can make a difference.

(AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR LEISURE STUDIES, 2020)

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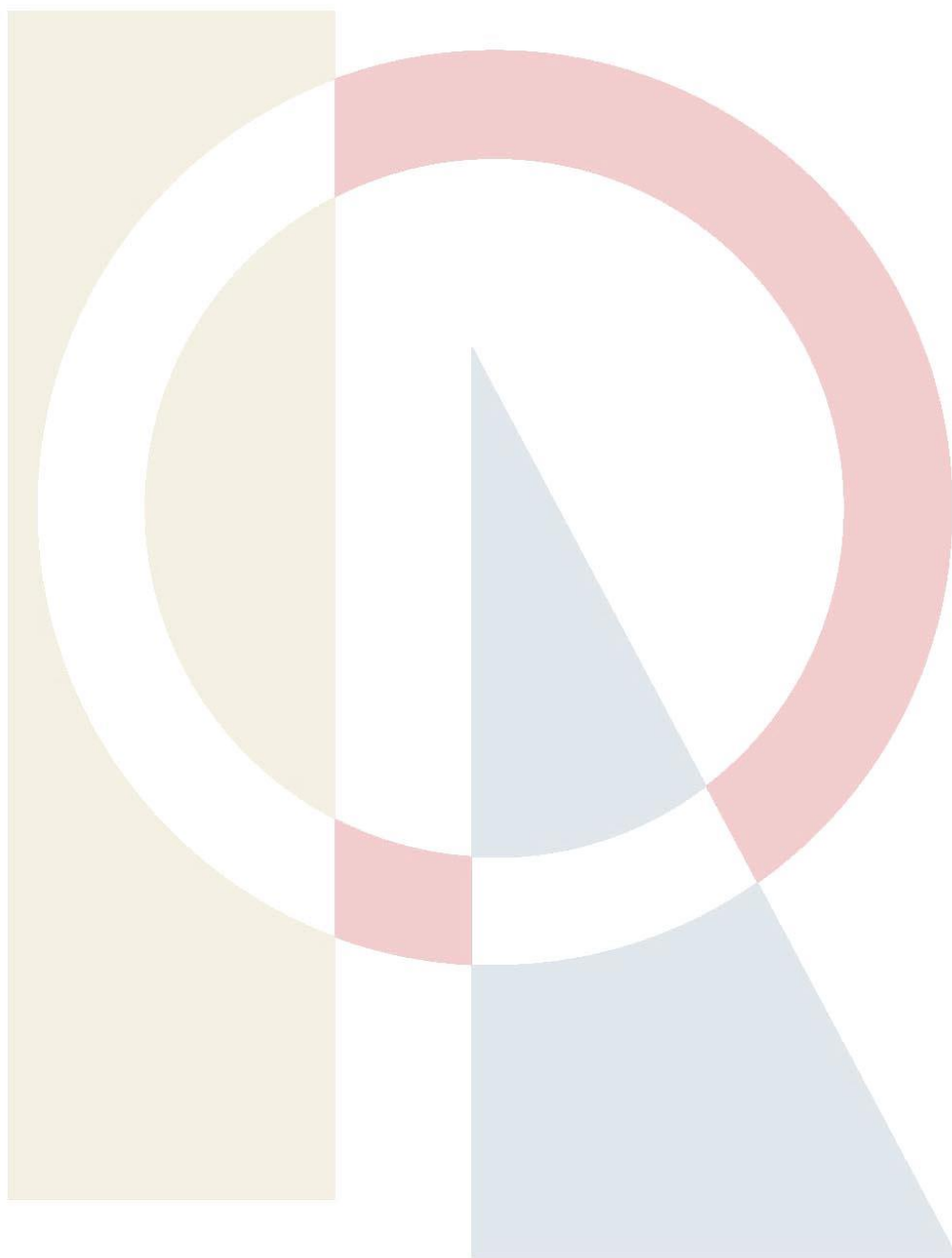
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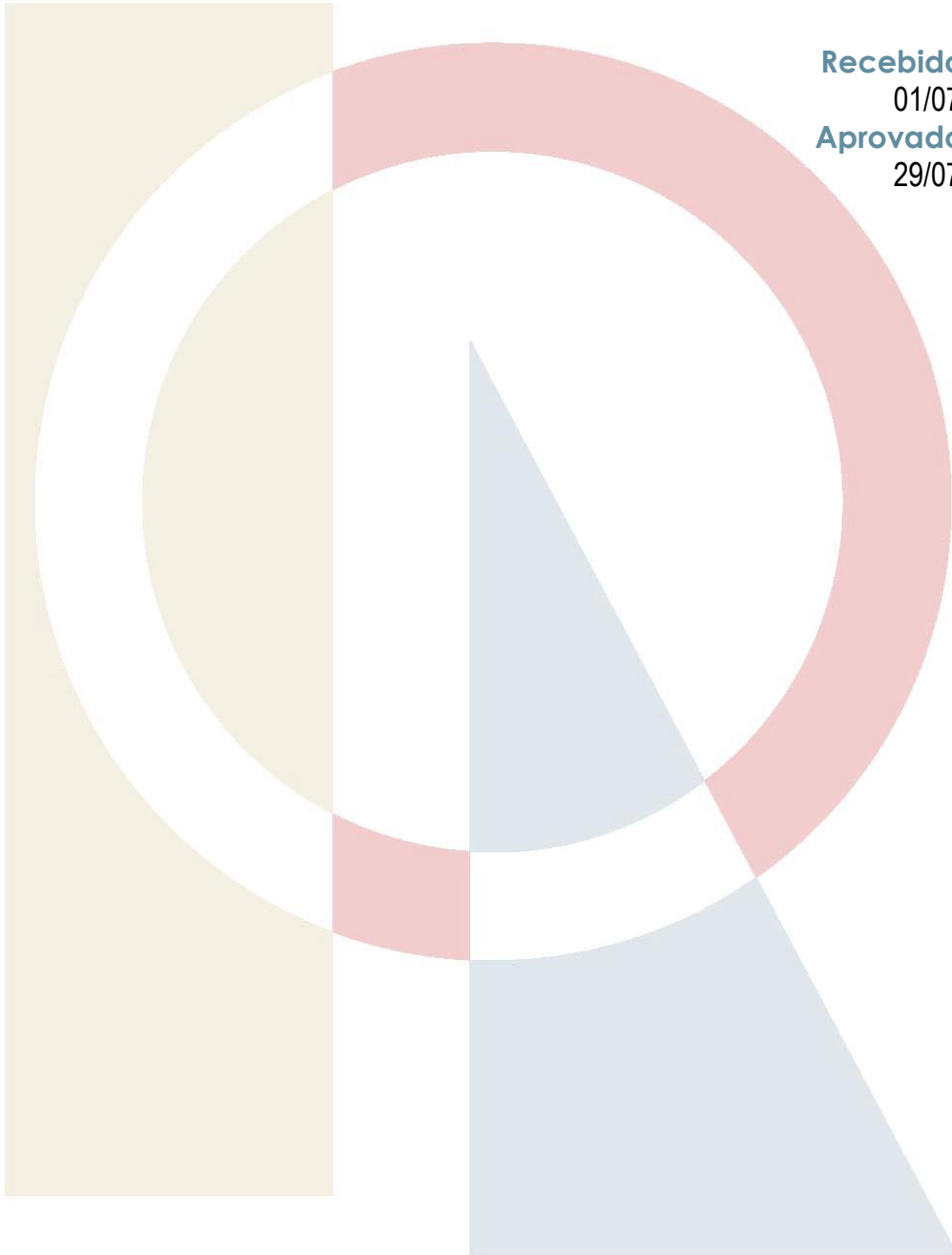
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