

Denis Auger, Romain Roullet & François Gravelle, Eds. (2019). *Introduction aux études en loisir*. Repentigny : Éditions Reynald Goulet inc. \$53,95/£30,24 (paperback), ISBN 978-2-89377-579-1

*“Free time can bring positive values, freedom values, personal growth, collective projects, active citizenship and new commitments. However, these liberated times can also be times of individual hyperconsumption and creation of inequalities favoring the standardization of behaviors and lifestyles. The stakes and the contradictions of the use of free time and leisure[s] are thus considerable and the margin to manœver to make times of freedom and not times of alienation is a major question posed to contemporary societies”.*

— (trans.) Jean-Pierre Augustin, 2019, p. vii.

This French textbook presents a thorough overview of theories and concepts in leisure(s) studies. First of all, it should be emphasized that *the civilization of leisure* sustained by Dumazedier (1967/1962) is not primarily a Utopia which many philosophers or other thinkers might conceptualize as an ideal to pursue blindly, but is a materialistic evidence of human consumption in wealthy contemporary societies. The evolution of the complexity of leisure(s) is “both recognized by and necessary for human, but is also seen as a good given to oneself or to be granted to another when the ‘leftover is under control’; by the leftover, we mean of course labour and personal responsibilities” (trans. Auger, Roullet, & Thériault 2019, p. 6). This current worldview offers the possibility of defining leisure(s) in many ways, not only for the specialists themselves, but more specifically by the practitioners who search for various meanings in the course of their lives with the hope of discerning a direction to follow. These authors describe magnificently the opportunity for people to succeed in their lives by means of leisure(s). The reader should be advised finally that leisure(s) is always a “state of mind; it is a way of being at peace with oneself and what one is doing” (Neulinger 1974, p. xvii). It is a liberated personal time in our private lives which provides enjoyed moments of rest. Thus there

is time to develop oneself in a perpetual movement to become a better human, and then into a more authentic person despite the obstacles in our lives.

The textbook is divided into sixteen chapters that are arranged in six areas of approach for the study of leisure(s) –theories and concepts. The first is an historical approach regarding leisure(s) (Chapters 1, 2, 6, 10, 13 and 14); the second approach makes an in-depth analysis of the definition of leisure(s) and its components (Chapter 3); the third approach studied suitably leisure(s) participation (Chapter 4) and multiculturalism in Canada (Chapter 5); the fourth approach understands appreciably some practices of leisure(s) such as outdoor recreation, tourism and sport activities (Chapter 7, 8, and 9); the fifth approach, the role and the competencies of the leisure(s) professional (Chapter 11) and the explanation of leisure(s) management (Chapter 12); finally, the sixth approach presents brilliantly the dimension of scientific research in leisure(s) (Chapter 15) and also the stakes of leisure(s) in relationship to social trends (chapter 16). Each chapter contains the aim, the keywords, the review questions and references. It would have also been helpful to have inserted an index and a glossary in the last section of the textbook. The 16 authors who contributed to this work are mostly well-known international and national leaders, professors and graduate students specializing in leisure(s) studies: Jean-Marc Adjizian, Denis Auger, H el ene Carbonneau, Julie Fortier, H el ene Fournier, Fran ois Gravelle, George Karlis, Marie-Claude Lapointe, Marc-Andr e Lavigne, Pascale Marcotte, Sylvie Miaux, Romain Roult, Maude St-Laurent, Marie- eve St-Pierre, Gabrielle Th eriault and Andr e Thibault.

Although this crucial work meets the need for more knowledge anchored in leisure(s), the book has some weaknesses. Most of the authors interchangeably use ‘leisure’ and ‘leisures’. This

manner of exposing the concept of leisure(s) is certainly due to an epistemic incoherence and creates serious confusion. Perhaps one of the reasons for this relative deficiency is the misuse of the concept 'modern' and 'post-modern'. As such, this resulted in a partially faulty reasoning which jeopardized the regeneration of the social fabric because, for many scientists, the contemporary societies since the tragedy of the World Trade Center on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 seem to represent the slow progression of the post-secular era stating, that the secularization concept no longer holds. So secular societies were defined by the zero-point theory which speculates that the more religion exists, the less modernization remains, and its opposite, the more modernized a society is, the less religion there is. This sociological interpretation cannot be operational anymore in contemporary societies because: "whoever claims today that the outcome of social process necessarily leads to a situation where religion may no longer have public meaning, and at best can be a private matter, is unmasked as being ideological" (Boeve 2012, p. 145). From this point of view, I suggest education so that we are in a situation to deconstruct ideologies (e.g., Dumont, 1981) and then reach a new form of Christian faith. In a way, socio-political policy makers need *the Wisdom of God* to find solutions in the face of challenges such as the ageing of population, the environmental crisis and the scarcity of resources for a growing population on Earth.

There are many spiritual principles peppered through the textbook such as the notion of time by St. Augustine (p. 36), the contemplation of Aristotle and St. Thomas of Aquinas (p. 99, 122), pilgrimage travelling (p. 122), tourism for religious reasons (p. 126), the spiritual criteria of leisure experience (p. 182) and the increasing influence of religions (p. 187). With these references to spirituality which is present in the contemporary societies, D'Amours (1987) clearly explains that leisure(s) is not a science but is studied within the parameters of other

classical academic disciplines. Thus Auger, Roullet and Thériault (2019) develop a multidisciplinary model of leisure with disciplines related to leisure studies: sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, geography, economics, education, management and marketing, philosophy, law, political science and communication (p. 7–17). Unfortunately, these authors do not consider theology as an academic discipline relevant to leisure studies, while paradoxically, Fournier (2019) fully recognized its relevance in chapter 15. For Carbonneau (2019) “the quest for a sense of purpose in life, meaningful social participation is fundamentally shared by the intervening people in leisure[s]” (trans. Carbonneau 2019, p. 160). From this opinion, it would have been consistent to include a chapter on theology, as it was well explored during the modernity era. There are also other disciplines which might study the problematic of leisure(s): gerontology, general medicine, psychoanalysis and psychiatry as well as ecology and environmental studies.

Another weakness in this textbook is a lack of compelling consensus about a unified and comprehensive definition of leisure(s). This impoverishing situation prevents the creation of beneficial interconnections between people who are interdependent in the social world and the communities. It is relevant to point out that there are needless territorial conflicts among leisure(s) specialists who have to struggle in spite of everything against the effects of fragmentation within their own discipline. Mistrust between them is palpable, and then, more humility is needed to overcome this human factor.

Three chapters are worthy our attention. The first is Carbonneau (2019) who tries in chapter 10 to animate and convince leisure(s) academicians of a false debate in North America. She argues basically that therapeutic leisure(s) in health services is not inclusive. In that sense, how

is it possible for people in this discussion who wish for more inclusion, and at the same time, behave excessively in expelling people from their trade environment, and for this reason, contradicting their own intention of more inclusion that they claim to value highly? The urgency of the situation requires prudence, patience, moderation and compassion from those who would like to resolve the socio-political tensions of leisure(s). This article seems more likely to settle an account rather than to resolve the understaffing in health services. Nevertheless, the author is free to assume that: “the role of the intervening person in leisure and health must now go beyond the institutional framework and open up to the needs of both vulnerable people in the community and municipal and community stakeholders to welcome them within ‘their walls’” (trans. Carbonneau 2019, p. 166). Thus there are reliable needs to create gerontology programs among Colleges and Universities for the ageing population in a win-win situation with a mutual agreement. Also, in addition to typographical errors about dates, Carbonneau’s (2019) reference list omits a few authors that she mentioned in her text (Bell & Troxell 1997, Ginest & Pellisier 2007, Peterson & Gunn 1984, Reynolds & O’Morrow 1985, to name a few).

Lavigne produces in chapter 12 an effective critics of leisure(s) management. He has the honesty and the courage to affirm that: “leisure[s] management condemns itself to fragmentation, especially since the definition of what serves as the unifying thread or integral element to all this body of knowledge is not so obvious” (trans. Lavigne 2019, p. 210). From this personal perspective, there are fragile links between public and commercial sectors in leisure(s) more precisely in Canada that should hopefully create an entrepreneurial movement in this profession. Business creation and development in communities will become more accurate from time to time for new and more ample project management in the social world.

Therefore, leisure(s) professionals in the public sector will have to adapt themselves with care and thoughtfulness their relationships with the commercial sector realities.

Fortier and St-Pierre (2019) in chapter 14 state that, in 2001, it was estimated there were 500 000 people who volunteered in leisure(s) services fields. Ten years later, in 2012, this number had increased to 590 000. This augmentation is quite amazing and raises the question of how these authors calculated this high number, considering the quantitative factor that the population of Quebec is 8 394 034? This large number of volunteers seems at first glance out of proportion or does not show its real status. On the contrary, Gaudet (2011, p. 16) ask from her standpoint this query: “Do we have time always for others?” This question suggests that voluntary work needs clarification so we can resolve this imbroglio. Furthermore, it must be specified that some segment of the population of Quebec is dealing with financial stress, job insecurity and some vulnerabilities. Under these circumstances, it is quite difficult to give time for volunteer work without compensation. There are solutions to this problem, such as the possibility of creating virtual salary (Rifkin 1996/1995) with volunteer work in return which might have many forms.

The textbook introduces a valuable background content and clear picture for the readers who are not familiar with the topic of leisure(s). The writing style of this tremendous book makes pleasant reading even if there are typographical errors throughout the articles designed for professors and students, social sciences researchers, public policy makers and any reader who are aware to some extent of the imaginary influence of leisure(s) in the contemporary societies of our time. This work is a precious pedagogical tool which contributes to the understanding of leisure(s) as vital for the rejuvenation of the body, spirit, heart and soul. In the corpus of this

long-awaited textbook, academics and teachers in leisure(s) disciplines will discover information in French for the conscientious planning of their courses. For this reason, the authors are to be credited for elaborating on some themes in the knowledge of leisure(s) and deserve sincere congratulations for a task well done with integrity and professionalism.

## References

- Auger, D., Roul, R., Thériault, G. (2019). Histoire du loisir contemporain et réflexions disciplinaires. Dans D. Auger, R. Roul, & F. Gravelle (Eds.), *Introduction aux études en loisir* (pp. 5–19). Repentigny: Éditions Reynald Goulet inc.
- Bell, V., & Troxel, D. (1997). *The best friends approach to alzheimer's care*. Baltimore, MD: Health Professions Press.
- Boeve, L. (2012). Religious education in a post-secular and post-Christian context. *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education*, 33(2), 143–156.
- Carbonneau, H. (2019). Historique du développement du loisir dans le secteur de la santé. Dans D. Auger, R. Roul, & F. Gravelle (Eds.), *Introduction aux études en loisir* (pp. 153–171). Repentigny: Éditions Reynald Goulet inc.
- D'Amours, M. (1987). *En compagnie de Max D'Amours, rôle du récréologue dans la société québécoise* [DVD]. Available from Trois-Rivières Library.
- Dumazedier, J. (1962/1967). *Vers une civilisation du loisir ? [Toward a society of leisure]*. Paris/New York, NY: Seuil/Free Press.
- Dumont, F. (1981). Une révolution culturelle ? In F. Dumont, J. Hamelin, & J.-P. Montminy (Eds.), *Idéologies du Canada-Français, 1940-1976, tome 1* (pp. 5–31). Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Fortier, J., & St-Pierre, M. È. (2019). Fondements historiques et évolution du bénévolat en loisir aux Québec. Dans D. Auger, R. Roul, & F. Gravelle (Eds.), *Introduction aux études en loisir* (pp. 229–242). Repentigny: Éditions Reynald Goulet inc.
- Gaudet, S. (2011). Avons-nous encore du temps pour les autres ? *Développement social*, 12(1), 16–17.
- Neulinger, J. (1974). *The psychology of leisure*. Springfield, IL: Charles Thomas Publisher.

- Lavigne, M. A. (2019). La gestion en loisir : Les facteurs qui la rendent particulière. Dans D. Auger, R. Roullet, & F. Gravelle (Eds.), *Introduction aux études en loisir* (pp. 199–212). Repentigny: Éditions Reynald Goulet inc.
- Pellisier, J., & Gineste, Y (2007). *Humanitude : Comprendre la vieillesse, prendre soin des hommes vieux*. Paris : Armand Colin.
- Peterson, C. A., & Gunn, S. L. (1984). *Therapeutic recreation program design: Principles and procedures, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Reynold, R. P., & O'Morrow (1985). *Problems, issues & concepts in therapeutic recreation*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Rifkin, J. (1995/1996). *La fin du travail. [The end of work : The decline of global labor force and the dawn of the post-market era]*. Paris-Québec/New-York, NY: Découverte-Boréal/Putnam Publishing Group.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mrs Monique Heintzman and Dr. Martin Farrell, O.P. for their reading of the text which improve the quality of the writing style of this essay review.