

# LEISURE STUDIES

The early 21st century has already produced two defining events: the mapping of the human genome and the destruction of the World Trade Center. It is already a century of massive opportunity and massive risk. And these opportunities and risks are not confined to the so-called 'developed world'.

This will be a century of rapidly accelerating social, natural and technological change. Key issues and problems for academics and policy makers will include: the environment, ageing, work, world population growth and distribution and changing forms of warfare. This series will provide academics and libraries with the key resources they need to understand these changes. The series will effectively provide a map of the landscape of the early 21st century that will offer a context for understanding the immediate future.

**Chris Rojek** is Professor of Sociology and Culture at Brunel University, West London. He is a prolific and influential author in the field of Leisure Studies. In addition to many articles, his books on the subject are, *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* (1985); *Decentring Leisure* (1995); *Leisure and Culture* (2000); *Leisure Theory: Principles & Practice* (2005); and *The Labour of Leisure* (2009). He is also co-editor (with Sue Shaw and A.J. Veal) of the best selling *Handbook of Leisure Studies* (2006). In 2003 he was awarded the Allen V. Saporin prize for outstanding achievement in the field of Leisure and Recreation Studies from the USA. Besides lecturing in the UK he has given lectures on leisure in Australia, Canada, the USA and the Netherlands. In 2009 he was Hood Fellow at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. He also writes on celebrity culture, neat capitalism and myths and realities of national identity. His current research is on popular music and popular culture and the meaning of the celetoid in Reality TV.

KEY ISSUES FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

# LEISURE STUDIES

## VOLUME I

*Origins: Classic & Contemporary Theories*

Edited by  
Chris Rojek



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi  
Singapore | Washington DC

Introduction and editorial arrangement © Chris Rojek 2010

First published 2010

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2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

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B 1/I 1, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area  
Mathura Road  
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd  
33 Pekin Street #02-01  
Far East Square  
Singapore 048763

### **British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-4129-2394-1 (set of four volumes)

### **Library of Congress Control Number: 2008943778**

Typeset by Star Compugraphics Private Limited, Delhi  
Printed on paper from sustainable resources  
Printed by MPG Books Group, Bodmin, Cornwall



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# Editor's Introduction: Leisure Studies

Chris Rojek

The academic study of leisure is a relatively new phenomenon. Aristotle made reference to leisure in his *Nicomachaen Ethics* (tr. 1941), and elsewhere. Here he identifies leisure with a state of mind, pure contemplation. However, as the American philosopher, John Dewey (1916) recognized, Aristotle's view is of limited value in the urban-industrial era. This is because Aristotle classifies leisure as an attribute of the elite class. The latter subsist on the surplus created by the majority. As Dewey points out, the argument that leisure is the preserve of the elite, and mechanical, vegetative labour is the lot of the masses, is incompatible with urban industrial democracy. The latter formally assigns liberty as the right of every individual and commits the state to providing some level of positive assistance to the disadvantaged and distressed. For a liberal progressive urban-industrial theorist like Dewey, the challenge for educators and politics is to devise personally enriching forms of leisure for industrial workers. The purpose is not to pacify them. Dewey is a true democrat in that he believes in the common man and woman and wishes to supply the means to enrich their lives. This is not freedom in the sense of eliminating God or overthrowing the ruling class. It is a matter of Dewey affirming that industrialization produces such a variety of fruits that it is morally right to share more widely. This modern view is in sharp contrast to the writings on leisure in ancient society.

Aristotle holds a visionary view of leisure as a fixed quality of life possessed by those who occupy an elite position in civilization. He sees it as the highest expression of civilization. For this reason he seeks to restrict it to the best educated and the most powerful. In leisure, the individual is free to pursue interests without the mediation associated with a slave relationship or the employment contract. Free from the bane of existence, pure contemplation can pursue an untrammelled path of its own choosing.

Some aspects of this view are reproduced in the writings of modern authors. Conservative commentators like Pieper (1952), De Grazia (1962) and O'Loughlin (1978) follow Aristotle in regarding forced or paid employment as the bane of life. Mass entertainment and commercial leisure is dismissed as the freedom of a dupe, since they ultimately comply with the hands of the workplace clock. In the words of O'Loughlin (1978: 5):

What we mean by leisure today is essentially and negatively "un-business."  
"Free time" connotes only time free *from* the world of affairs; like a day

“off” in the work week, the meaning depends on, and the value is restricted by, the temporal frame of reference. We have “time on our hands” and “time to kill”, but we have no locution to indicate time free for its own sake, time not as escape, but as fulfilment (emphasis in original).

The phrase ‘time free for its own sake’ and the identification of time with fulfilment, raises a set of separate questions. Since time is a human concept, in what sense does it exist for its own sake? If I have a day free, I might elect to spend it in reading a novel in the morning, walking downtown for lunch, watching a movie in the afternoon and weeding the garden in the evening. But these activities are coded by my employment, income, education, state of health, absence of child-care responsibilities and many other factors. It is hardly correct to refer to them as time for its own sake. The same applies to the equation of leisure with fulfilment. The questions are fulfilment from what, and for what? Fulfilment is not a natural or God-given concept. Our consciousness of it reflects social being. In turn, this raises the problem of how class, race, ethnicity and gender situate us in relation to scarcity.

Conservative writers on leisure associate true leisure with a state of mind unencumbered by the necessity to work. They are visionary, in that they regard leisure as the hub of life satisfaction, personal growth and the axis from which civilization develops. Their conservatism derives from the twin propositions that a) only the highest in society are in a position to make full use of true leisure; and b) work is the basis of leisure i.e. the leisure of the ruling groups depends upon the surplus value created by the majority. A life of leisure for everyone is not in this agenda. For the majority, leisure is secondary to work and it must remain so if society is to prosper.

The counterpoint to the visionary argument is the pragmatic case. John Dewey (1916) is a leading exponent of the pragmatic approach to leisure. He regards leisure as an entitlement of life and endeavours to maximize positive leisure experience through the state-directed, productive allocation of scarce resources.

Pragmatists agree with visionaries that mass entertainment and commercialized leisure constitute deformations of leisure. Life satisfaction, personal growth and the highest expression of civilization depend upon education and energy. However, pragmatists depart from visionaries in holding that this meaning of leisure must be annexed to an elite. Urban-industrial culture has produced sufficient freedom from scarcity for true leisure to be available to industrial workers. To achieve this end is a matter of rational resource allocation, especially the reduction of the working week, bringing down the age of retirement and investing in life-long education.

These arguments have a specific affinity with Marxism. As Raymond Williams (1977: 206–8) noted, at the core of Marxism is a profound emphasis upon human creativity and self-creation. Free, conscious, productive life is the character of the human species. It distinguishes us from animals and nature.

Through the labour process labourers duplicate consciousness into reality and position themselves in a world of their own-making.

Under capitalism, and pre-existing modes of production, including ancient, feudal renaissance and mercantile society, the difficulty is that free, conscious, productive life is handicapped by the employment contract which condemns workers to a regimented, unfree existence. The employment contract merely reflects class inequality that prevents the free and full expression of the life-species. For Marx, labour is mutilated by capitalism. The relations of capitalist production operate as a chain on the expression of creativity and self-creation. The solution is the replacement of class-based society with a higher social mode. In Marx's (1875 tr, 1971: 17–18) words:

After the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the anthesis between mental and physical labour have vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.

As Rojek (2010) have submitted elsewhere, the struggle between visionaries and pragmatists has left its mark on the field. There is a tension between those who believe that Leisure Studies must focus upon the content of the forms and practices of what people do in their free time, and those who hold that the field must take account of how social being determines our consciousness of leisure and freedom. This is not the end of the matter.

### **The Theory of the Leisure Class and *Homo Ludens***

In the first genuinely classical work in the field, Thorstein Veblen (1899) inverts Aristotle's argument and anticipates the objections that were later directed at the Pragmatist case. Veblen argues that the elite is indeed a leisure class that subsist on the surplus produced by the majority, just as Aristotle proposed. However, *contra* Aristotle, Veblen's leisure class do not devote themselves to cultivating leisure as a state of mind, nor does he regard believe that the majority doomed to mechanical, vegetative labour.

To take the question of the elite first, they are a tirelessly *active* class. In capitalist society action is closely connected with production. When a worker acts he or she makes a commodity that is allocated an exchange value in the market. The labour of the worker is rewarded with an economic payment that is bound by the terms of the employment contract.

The actions of the leisure class are also productive. They do not engage in paid employment or make commodities. On the contrary, their leisure is fixated upon activity that is designed to possess no pecuniary value and

signifies freedom from the requirement to submit to paid-employment. Following the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) we would now call this activity *cultural capital*. That is, productive endeavour to increase the value of the distinction attributable to individuals and groups. In the case of the leisure class it consists of pastimes that are either obsolescent in industrial-urban society (such as equestrianism and cultivating dead languages such as ancient Greek or Latin), or lavish, high profile expenditure on resources in a calendar of events like grand parties, gymkhanas, regattas and balls. Veblen calls this *conspicuous consumption*.

Although these activities identify the leisure class they are not confined to them. This brings us to the topic of the majority and its relation to mechanical, vegetative labour. Veblen argues that, as industrialization advances, the strata below the leisure class acquire greater access to scarce resources and, in time, emulate the practices of the dominant stratum. Conspicuous consumption is imitated and the production of waste becomes a general token of individual and group prestige. This argument stands the work ethic upon its head. Veblen acknowledges that paid labour generates value just as exponents of the work ethic submit. The twist he brings to the argument is that, as societies become more civilized, a good deal of surplus value is allocated to the production and celebration of waste.

In making the case to spread leisure to the masses Pragmatists unintentionally create a major crisis for industrial culture. One hand celebrates conspicuous consumption as a mark of distinction and the other hand moves scarce resources from the necessary goals of social and economic progress. The result is that the competitive capacity of advanced industrial societies decline. These societies become prone to challenges from new industrial societies in which the leisure class has not established a stronghold.

Other contributions depart from the arguments of visionaries and pragmatists by proposing the leisure possesses a central role in human innovation. Huizinga (1944) and Mumford (1967) maintain that *homo ludens* (man the player) is the pre-condition of *homo faber* (man the worker). Human progress depends upon the communicative and symbolic capacities of mankind. Through language and the imagination humans conceive and make a world in their own image. The primary locus of communication and imagination is not work. Only in leisure can humans follow their own fancies and trains of thought and action in a manner that is self-directed. Leisure is here, not treated as 'the less serious' side of life, as Durkheim (1933) called it. On the contrary leisure is the seat of unbridled creativity upon which depends social, economic, technological and scientific advancement.

This confines leisure to the play form. It connects leisure to freedom, choice and creativity. It neglects the subject of the place of leisure in consumer society (Cook 2006; Glover 2006). You might have the freedom and choice to do this and that in your leisure. But if your freedom depends upon the wealth generated by your work, and your choice reflects the commodity options and

commodified experience presented by consumer culture in what sense are you free and how might it be said that you have choice? Huizinga's (1944) conflation of leisure with the play form is a rich source of insight. However, in avoiding the topic of leisure and commodification it provides only a partial analysis of leisure. It is one, to boot, that ignores a central lever in leisure motivation and behaviour: consumer culture.

## The Institutionalization of Leisure Studies

These various positions existed before the Second World War but they constituted patches of knowledge and debate about leisure rather than a genuine field of enquiry. Questions of leisure figured in public debate about social development and the future. They were dear to the hearts of scholars and students interested in housing, crime, public health, psychological wellbeing, work training and education. They were inserted as preoccupations in several general movements of social improvement, such as the *City Beautiful* movement in the USA and the *Rational Recreation* movement in the UK. Here leisure for the industrial worker was explicitly identified with social progress and the good life (Yeo and Yeo 1981; Borzello 1987; Wilson 1994).

Side by side with this emancipatory goal is the recognition that undirected leisure in the masses inevitably breeds vice, illness and addiction. The origins of the modern study of leisure sprouted from a mixture of hope and anxiety. Hope lay in the vast productive power of industrial organization that created a surplus of economic wealth that was unparalleled in human history (Cross 1993; Kammen 1998). Anxiety sprang from the immense concatenation of humans in over-crowded housing sectors of the city, some without work, others with some with a few spare coins jangling in their pockets, and all, with more time on their hands than had ever been dreamt of by their mothers and fathers (Steadman Jones 1971; Samuel 1988).

When the time came for the first University courses to be devised and implemented it is not surprising that they reflected wider social hopes and fears. The pioneering work of Charles Brightbill and Allen Sabora at the University of Illinois was typical. It may be consulted to illustrate how the tensions in social thinking about the growth of leisure and recreation played out in the curriculum.

The study of leisure in the University commenced with a course on 'Recreational Activities' convened in Jack Treece in 1932. It was taught in the Curriculum of Physical Education for Men. It attracted students who were primarily interested in becoming school and college teachers. Treece's course was essentially impressionistic and descriptive, providing students with a sense of the importance of recreation to individuals and communities and conveying a sense of the range of free-time activities in America. No attempt was made to engage systematically with philosophical, sociological or psychological writings

on leisure and recreation. There was nothing in the course that resembled a political economy of leisure.

It was succeeded in 1937 by a more analytical course entitled 'Principles of Recreation'. Recruitment extended beyond students studying Physical Education to encompass urban planners, social workers and non-vocational students with an interest in leisure and recreation. It certainly presented a sense of the huge potential that more leisure offered industrial workers to improve their quality of life and contribute to social advancement. But there was also recognition that more undirected free time endangered the individual and society by producing idle hands and vacant minds. 'Principles of Recreation' included a prototypical appreciation of the therapeutic function of leisure in its role of enriching the personal experience of unemployment and getting people back to work. The course was closely tied to field-work, notably visits to the Works Progress Administration program (WPA) into established in the nearby town of Decatur under the Directorship of Brightbill. The WPA program was launched in 1935 as part of Roosevelt's New Deal. It was intended to provide economic relief and the expansion of cultural horizons for US citizens suffering from the great depression. Art, music, theatre and dance were funded by public resources as part of an egalitarian policy of economic relief and social reform. The WPA is one of the first major examples of the public use of creative industries for the purpose of social engineering. This carried over into the leisure and recreation curriculum at the University of Illinois.

In 1939 the University supplemented the undergraduate programme with the first graduate course in the field. It was called 'Philosophy and Administration of Education' and taught by Hartley D. Price. This was a theory based course. It reflected the new confidence among leisure and recreation educators in explicitly identifying leisure as a precondition of physical and psychological health and a catalyst for social progress. However, it offered an uncritical, functionalist view of leisure that was disconnected from matters of power, class and ideology. Leisure was portrayed as a mark of social progress and a source of personal enrichment and growth.

In 1940 a Bachelor of Science degree with a specialization in Recreation was established, under the leadership of one of Price's graduate assistants, Allen V. Sapora and the curriculum coordinator Ralph Johnson. In 1951, Charles K. Brightbill was appointed Chairman of the Recreation curriculum in the School of Physical Education. Two years later a Master of Science in Recreation was introduced. The curriculum was geared to state and federal employment opportunities. In 1957 the Department of Recreation and Municipal Park Administration was established within the College of Physical Education. At that time the staff complement consisted of four full time faculty members and two graduate assistants.

In the UK the institutionalization of leisure occurred later and was less dynamic. Tomlinson (2006: 258) notes the existence of a tradition of exploring

questions of leisure and recreation in Workers Education Association (WEA) and Art School curricula. These were not connected to vocational qualifications. Instead they were part of a liberal studies education. As late as the mid 70s, degrees in leisure and recreation were not established in the British University system. The topic of leisure and recreation featured in some courses in Sociology, Geography, Physical Education, Education Studies and Housing and Transport Studies. But it was marginal to the curriculum.

British students interested in developing a career of teaching and research into Leisure Studies were faced with three bald options. Firstly, they could register as researchers in academic Social Science departments and study under established teachers with an interest in leisure and recreation. Among the principal figures and research centres at this time were Eric Dunning (University of Leicester), Ken Roberts (University of Liverpool) and Stanley Parker (Regent Street Polytechnic, London).

Secondly, they could specialize in leisure and sport at Training Colleges in Physical Education. Andy Yiannakis and Peter Donnelly took this route. However, in order to develop a career in these areas, they were forced to migrate to North America where research and academic work opportunities were better developed.

Thirdly, the topic of leisure and sport could be pursued in departments of urban and regional planning. The Urban and Regional Studies unit at the University of Birmingham was an important centre, to which A.J. Veal and Judy White were attached. Masters courses were also offered at North London Polytechnic and Edinburgh University.

Degree level courses specializing in Leisure and Sports Studies were basically a child of the late 70s and early 80s. Pioneering institutions were the Carnegie School of Human Movement at Leeds Polytechnic and the Chelsea School of Brighton Polytechnic played the leading role in recruiting and training students (Tomlinson 2006).

The expansion of degree courses in Leisure and Recreation translated into the entry of more graduates into the leisure and recreation sector. The bulk of jobs here was concentrated in the public sector. Graduates worked in leisure and recreation administration departments, leisure centres, heritage sites and national parks and waterways. The size of the sector and the expansion in the number of graduates

translated into the professionalization of the field. This involved developing an ethical code of practice for leisure professionals and constructing a philosophy of the principles of leisure and recreation management. In these respects, a significant development was the founding of the *World Leisure Organization*, in 1952 with a brief to discover how leisure might enhance human growth, personal and group development. It developed a twin strategy of informed advocacy and educational research to pursue these goals.

Similarly, in America the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) has defined a professional ethics code to achieve inclusion, group cohesion and

standards of conduct. It requires members to pledge themselves to 5 edicts of conduct:

- Adhere to the highest standards of integrity and honesty in all public and personal activities to inspire public confidence and trust.
- Strive for personal and professional excellence and encourage the professional development of associates and students.
- Strive for the highest standards of professional competence, fairness, Impartiality, efficiency, effectiveness and fiscal responsibility.
- Avoid any interest or activity that is in conflict with the performance of job responsibilities.
- Support equal opportunities.

Between the mid 1960s and early 80s the primary professional associations with which we are familiar today were in place: National, Recreation and Parks Association (NPRA, USA, 1965); the Leisure Studies Association (LSA, UK, 1975); and the American Academy of Leisure Sciences (AALS, 1980). The membership of these associations is inter-disciplinary including Sociology, Geography, Psychology, Economics, Planning, Architecture, Ecological Sciences, Physical Education, Recreation Management, Entertainment Media, Local and National government, tourism and the leisure industries. However, the overwhelming bulk of membership is concentrated among academics.

In fine, the expansion of leisure and recreation degrees is a post-war phenomenon. Broadly speaking, the main leap of growth occurred between 1975 and the late 90s. During this period, internal specialization in the field produced the separation of Sports Studies/Science and Tourism Studies. Students of leisure were redefined as specialists in Sport and Tourism. They developed their own degrees, conferences and journals.

### **The Leisure Society Thesis**

Students of leisure never exactly set the public agenda. But in the late 1960s and 70s their profile was raised from an unlikely source. Talk of the affluent and permissive society precipitated the notion that industrial society, with its unpropitiated ogres of want, misery, idleness and over-work, would be replaced with a new socio-economic order: post-industrial society (2). The term is generally associated with Daniel Bell's thought provoking book, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1974). Veal (1987: 48) argues that the term pre-dated Bell. He traces it back to Arthur Penty's book, *Old Worlds For New* (2004). Prior to Bell, David Riesman (1958) also used the term in a work that was the first to connect post-industrial society with the growth of leisure as a central value of lifestyle.

Post-industrial society theory, drew on stage theories of economic growth (Rostow 1991; Kerr *et al.* 1963), the expansion of higher education and consumer culture and the introduction of new labour saving technologies in work and the home. It indicated the emergence of a new type society based upon knowledge and communication as opposed to manual labour and the factory. Bell (1974) contended that there are five identifying characteristics to post-industrial society:

- 1) Service economy replaces manufacturing as the main source of employment and the prime-mover of growth.
- 2) The labour market becomes dominated by a new professional and technical class which gains pre-eminence over the conventional working class.
- 3) The axial principle of social organization is theoretical knowledge.
- 4) Business and lifestyle directions become oriented to the future.
- 5) Decision-making is dominated by the technocratic and professional class.

The leisure society thesis was a spin off from the emphasis in post-industrial society theory upon lifelong education, the decline of manual labour and the contraction of the working class. It proposed that automation and the productivity of science and technology will combine to replace the work ethic with leisure. In the words of the leisure psychologist, John Neulinger (1981:69):

Something is changing in our society and potentially all over the world. The need for toil is on its way out.

More specifically, the need for toil *for the average person* is on its way out. A select few have always managed to circumvent toil, labour without satisfaction, the endless routine of drudgery. But now for the first time in history, the possibility looms ahead that such may be the case for the majority of people, if not all.

With hindsight, all of the defects of the leisure society thesis and post-industrial society theory that we now recognize are evident in this purple passage from Neulinger. To begin with, the view of the changing leisure-work balance that he expresses is ethnocentric. At the time Neulinger was writing, the only country in which a majority of the labour force were located in the service sector was the USA. Economic stage theory, *a la* Rostow (1991) and Kerr *et al.* (1963), presented a mechanical theory of development that was no less deterministic and wrong-headed than vulgar Marxism (which in many ways it resembled) (3). The expansion of the service sector in the West corresponded with the re-distribution of assembly-line and manufacturing jobs to cheaper labour markets in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. These economies witnessed the growth of sweatshop labour conditions in many sectors of the labour market, making a mockery of Neulinger's claim that the world is in the midst of making freedom from toil real for 'the majority, if not all.'

Turning to the question of global inequality, Neulinger's prediction of leisure for the majority simply ignored the development gap between the economically advanced, militarily dominant countries and the emerging world. Today, the USA claims 30% of the world's Gross Domestic Product, which is the same proportion as 1970 (Akimoto 2007). In 2001 the World Bank reported that 1.1 billion people in the world live at a consumption level of less than \$US 1 a day; 2.7 billion live on less than \$US 2 (<http://web.worldbank.org>).

The abolition of toil is the precondition of the leisure society thesis. Post-industrial society portrays technology as reducing the necessity to labour. All of this is reproduced as an article of faith by Neulinger. Yet Gershuny (1977) maintains that the growth of labour saving technologies for the home translates into households providing more of their personal servicing. Washing machines, dish-washers and vacuum cleaners do not eliminate labour. They produce the requirement for a different kind of labour which is delivered by the house-holders themselves, rather than out-sourced. In addition, Schor (1991) argues that the expansion of consumer culture generates new labour demands. As consumers seek to participate more fully in commodity culture they exchange free time for directed income generation. The transition from factory and plant based production to service production does not abolish toil. It creates fresh demands to keep up with Jones's and signify competence, relevance and credibility through boosting consumption opportunities by taking on additional burdens of paid employment. The result of multiple jobs and the rise of DIY culture in household management is leisure famine.

Neulinger was too precipitate in asserting that toil is on the way out and leisure is on the way in. The inflated claims made for the leisure society thesis damaged Leisure Studies. It raised academic and public doubts about the relevance and rigour of the field. The vague claims that students of leisure made to herald in the good life, contrasts pointedly with the evidence-based claims that Sports Studies/Science and Tourism Studies with respect to issues of bodily health, income generation (through events like the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup), environmental improvement, breaking down barriers between nations and so on.

However, not everything in post industrial society theory failed to hit the mark.

Over the last forty years one of the signal trends in the economically advanced industrial countries of the West is the contraction of the manufacturing sector. The labour market has compensated by the expansion of the service sector. Labour has swapped the assembly line for the desk top computer and mobile phone. In the UK, the Service Sector now produces over 70% of Gross National Product (Office of National Statistics 2000). In 1961, four out of ten workers based in the industrially advanced countries were employed in the service sector; in 1971 the figure increased to five out of ten; and currently the figure is seven out of ten. By 2005, in the UK more than seven times as many people (22 million) were employed in the service sector than the manufacturing centre (3 million) (Blyton and Jenkins 2007: 69–70).

## The New Context of Leisure Studies

The knowledge and information sector has expanded in the West, although it is far from clear that the people who occupy jobs here constitute a class, in the manner that Bell and his associates assumed. That is, these workers may be a class *in* itself, but they do not constitute a class *for* itself (4). Globalization has produced a significant transfer of manual productive labour to the emerging economies. The result is that the size and influence of the traditional working class in Western culture, politics and economics has diminished. Western lifestyle has been deeply etched by issues relating to health, diet, sexism, racism, climate change and the work-life balance. The ethical principles of Care for the Self and Care for the Other now permeate everyday life, influencing lifestyle choice and resource allocation. In the study of leisure, Stebbins's (1992, 2001) distinction between 'serious' and 'casual' leisure was one of the first contributions to illuminate the connection between leisure practice and social capital. Serious leisure forms, such as amateur dramatics, community gardening, neighbourhood watch schemes and voluntary care for the elderly, enrich the wealth of the community. These forms of volunteering produce a variety of psychological, social and cultural benefits. They also permit abstention from intensifying state fiscal policy. Serious leisure makes communities stronger and governments richer (Hemingway 1996; Arai and Pedlar 2003). Conversely, casual leisure has the opposite effects. Voluntary activity of this type is associated with vandalism, physical injury and social unrest. This destabilizes communities and intensifies fiscal discipline since the state must provide additional policing, therapeutic leisure facilities and medical assistance. The non-monetized value of leisure forms to the community and society is emerging as a key front of research. So is the monetized cost of leisure forms to the community and society.

For some time now, it has been unacceptable to confine the assessment of this profit and loss ratio to the territorial and civic boundaries of the nation-state.

In the West, leisure forms and practice operate in a new context of globalization, out-sourcing and the deregulation of labour and financial markets. This has produced new economic relations of co-dependence between suppliers of leisure commodities and consumers. The chains of supply and demand in leisure are international. Companies like *Nike*, *Reebok*, *Apple*, *Microsoft*, *Nikon*, *Pepsi* and *Adidas* employ workers in the emerging and developing world to assemble their products. Large sectors in the economies of countries like the Philippines, Taiwan, Mexico, Indonesia and Thailand specialize in supplying leisure goods to markets in the economically advanced countries. A significant percentage of this trade is illegal. Trafficking in narcotics, sex workers, designer clothes apparel and contraband cigarettes in the economically advanced nations, involves gangs and cartels with bases in the emerging and developing world. In 2004 the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy estimated that poppy cultivation (the source of heroin and morphine) in

Afghanistan doubled between 2002–2003, from 76,900 to 152,000 hectares. Although the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) (2008) reports a drop in production in 2008, poppy cultivation remains a significant component of the Afghan economy.

Turning to the question of human trafficking, the US Department of State (2007) estimates that 800,000 people are trafficked between international borders, usually for the purpose of sexual exploitation. This figure does not include the millions who are trafficked as sex workers *within* international borders. The most recent UNDOC Report (2006) on human trafficking identifies the following countries as 'very high' in supplying illegal human traffic: Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Lithuania, Nigeria, Republic of Moldova, Rumania, Russian Federation, Thailand and the Ukraine. The Report lists the following nations as 'very high' markets for illegal human traffic: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Netherlands, Thailand, Turkey and the USA.

The globalization of the supply of illegal drugs and human traffic to the leisure markets of the economically advanced countries, requires new bilateral and multilateral types of legislation and policing. More parochially, it requires students of leisure to 'think globally' and to encompass the under-world dimension into leisure theory. This is a challenging task. Within the profession of Leisure Studies there are very strong associations between leisure and positive experience. Consider the current philosophy of the *Academy of Leisure Sciences*, founded in the USA in 1980 with a brief to pursue the intellectual advancement of leisure. At the time of writing (2009) the web-site *White Paper 7* (n.d.) lists the personal and public benefits of leisure. It groups them under five sub-headings based upon 'well documented', although in this case completely un-cited, research:

## 1. Economic Benefits

The leisure industry is now one of the biggest industries in the world. In quantitative terms, in four out of five of the top 50 states in the USA, tourism ranks in the top three of all industrial sectors in the volume of income and unemployment it generates.

## 2. Physiological Benefits

In so far as leisure is associated with physical exercise it maintains and improves health. Regular aerobic exercise offers cardiovascular benefits by reducing serum cholesterol and triglycerides, and high density lipids in the blood stream and helping prevent and control hypertension. It also reduces spinal problems, neuropsychological functioning, increases bone mass and

strength of children, creates better connective tissue, increases lung capacity and nurtures a holistic sense of wellbeing. Physiological benefits accrue to individuals but they also benefit society by reducing stress, enhancing energy for work and reducing the burden on public welfare programmes.

### 3. Environmental Benefits

The Preservation of Wilderness and Heritage enhances culture and personal wellbeing. It encourages positive attitudes to sustainability and recycling. Taxation on sports and recreation licences multiplies the resources that are appropriated for leisure use. The development of leisure and recreation does not simply protect the environment it enhances it, by bringing more and more acres and square yards into play functions.

### 4. Psychological Benefits

The psychological benefits associated with leisure include: perceived sense of freedom; independence; autonomy; improved self-competence; improved sense of self-worth; greater self-confidence; improved leadership skills; better ability to relate to others; more tolerance and understanding; value clarification, enhanced creative ability; expression and reflection on personal spiritual values and orientation; increased cognitive efficiency; better solving problem ability; greater adaptability and resilience; improved sense of cordiality and humour; greater joy from life; more balanced competitiveness; enhanced sense of personal place and fit; increased learning of history, culture, nature, cities etc; more positive outlook; nurturance of a can-do attitude; and reduced sense of personal alienation.

### 5. Social Benefits

The social/cultural benefits of leisure include: the development of pride in one's community and nation; the maintenance and transmission of the central values and positive identities in communities; maintain and enhance ethnic identities; meet the unique needs of particular segments of society (the elderly, single parents, children, teenagers, the physically disabled, vagrants and the under-employed); produces healthy child development; reduces social alienation; facilitates the recovery of institutionalized citizens; eases the burden of confinement; reduces substance abuse, crime and other social ills; and improves social integration.

This is formidable array of positive associations. Shifting the profession into acceptance that globalization involves the operations of gangs and cartels in the emerging and developing world supplying Western markets will involve abandoning many sacred cows. Stebbins' (1992, 2001) writings on causal

leisure have begun this process. He demonstrates that some leisure forms produce negative consequences to individuals and groups. According to the latest UN (2008) Afghan Opium Survey, the current fall in the supply of opium is the result of hoarding by illegal organizations to produce price inflation. The Report cites the Taliban as a major player in manipulating the opium market. It may be a tall order to persuade students of leisure that there is a direct correlation between leisure practice in the West and the terrorist activities of the Taliban. However, this transformation in perspective is necessary in order to protect the relevance of Leisure Studies as a field of enquiry.

The same applies to dealing with the effect of leisure activities upon climate change and the degradation of the environment. There are well established correlations between air and automobile travel for pleasure and increasing the carbon footprint. The pursuit of forms of leisure which hitherto, were labelled as harmless, innocent fun are now stigmatized as posing a threat to environmental equilibrium. The environmental protection lobby has castigated SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) culture, on the grounds that it is not energy inefficient and indeed, turns conspicuous waste into a virtue (5).

The global reaction to climate change at the state level, illustrates some of the difficulties involved in engineering tenable solutions to global problems. The Kyoto Protocol (1997) committed signatories to implement significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2012. However, the governments of the USA and Australia elected to withdraw from the agreement. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) argues that the withdrawal of the US economy from regulatory discipline is particularly significant. According to UNFCCC estimates, in 1990, the US population which consists of 4.6% of the world's population was responsible for 36.1% of carbon dioxide emissions. By comparison, the European Union, with 6.3% of the world's population was responsible for 24.2% of emissions in the same year. Australia, with a population of 20 million, has the highest emissions per capita in the developed world and is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest greenhouse polluter.

The US and Australian governments justify their non-participation upon the argument that the Protocol is unfair to the industrialized countries and damages jobs in the domestic economy. This position is reinforced by extensive lobbying from the US and Australian leisure industry that international regulation to reduce carbon dioxide emissions among air and automobile travellers involves unacceptable costs to lifestyle. However, for the environmental protection movement represented by organizations such as *Greenpeace America* and *KyotoUSA* the defence of leisure lifestyle against the known damage and potential risks to environmental equilibrium is deluded. Tolerance of energy inefficiency and waste in leisure activity is playing with fire. It tips the world into environmental disequilibrium with social, economic and physical risks that cannot be estimated.

Similar demands for change in leisure lifestyle are emerging from the work-life balance lobby. The value of exercise and diet in leisure is now widely

promulgated and well understood. The twin ethics of Care for the Self and Care for the Other were pivotal in building pressure to ban tobacco smoking in public throughout the West, and push alcohol producers to develop principles of responsible drinking (6).

Despite this, structural inequalities in health and mortality are stubbornly entrenched. Currently, in England and Wales, life expectancy at birth for males in the professional group is 7.4 years more than for those in the unskilled manual groups. The gap between the social classes was smaller for women than men, at 5.7 years. Between 1986 and 1999 partly skilled and unskilled workers were 5.5 times more likely than managerial, technical and professional workers to die from respiratory diseases.

Similarly, the infant mortality rate is highest for babies with fathers in semi-routine/routine occupations. Between 1994–2002 the general decrease in infant mortality in England and Wales was 16 per cent. For infants born to fathers in semi-routine/routine occupations it was significantly lower, at 5 per cent. If one turns to patterns of poor health and long term illness between the classes the divisions are just as stark (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>). Reporting of patterns of poor health peak among the long term unemployed and never-worked group (19 per cent for men and 20 per cent for women). They are lowest among workers in professional and managerial occupations (4 per cent and 5 per cent respectively). Among men with experience of long term unemployment or who have never worked, patterns of limiting long term illness were five times higher than for workers in the professional and managerial groups. Interesting differences in health exist between ethnic groups in the UK. For example, in 2001 Pakistani and Bangladeshi men and women reported the highest rates of poor health and chronic long-term illness, while Chinese men and women reported the lowest rates (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>).

Turning to the global dimensions of health and mortality, in the economically advanced countries of the West, a combination of declining fertility and increasing longevity is producing the greying of the population. The European Union birth rate has declined to 1.5 per 1000 women. In Italy and Spain it is as low as 1.2. The fertility rate in the more developed countries is projected to be 1.7 in 2010 and remain stable until 2025. In the less developed countries the rate is projected to fall to 2.7 in 2010 and 2.4 in 2025 ([www.overpopulation.com](http://www.overpopulation.com)). In nations committed to egalitarianism, declining fertility has a positive redistributive effect since collective resources are shared between a smaller population.

Increasing longevity is sadly not a global universal. The *World Health Organization Atlas* of life expectancy for 2005 showed that the life expectancy in Australia, Canada, Spain, France and Italy was over 80; in the USA, North Western Europe and Japan, 75–80; Mexico, North West Latin America, North Africa, the Middle East, Central Europe and Argentina, 70–75; Brazil, and most of the former USSR, 65–70; India, Pakistan, 60–65; Central, West and Eastern

Africa, 55–60 ([www.worldpolicy.org](http://www.worldpolicy.org) 2005). The figures at the lower end of life expectancy are very different. The *CIA World Fact Book* which in 2006 reports estimated life expectancy of 32.62 in Swaziland; 33.74 in Botswana; 38.62 in Angola; 42.73 in South Africa; 43.34 in Afghanistan; and below 50 in most of West, East and Central Africa.

Health, morality and leisure participation are directly influenced by the position of individuals and groups in relation to economic scarcity. The differences between social classes in this respect are profound. In the USA, the richest 1 per cent of households own 38 per cent of all wealth. The top 5 per cent own over 50 per cent of all wealth. The top 20 per cent own over 80 per cent of all wealth. From the late 1920s to the mid 70s there was a more or less continuous downward trend. Since the mid 70s the trend has reversed. The level of wealth inequality in 2003 was almost double what it was in the mid 70s (Wolff 2003).

In countries with a more 'Welfarist' approach to resource distribution, such as Australia and the UK, wealth inequalities are still striking. In 2004, the top 10 per cent of Australians owned nearly 50 per cent of national wealth. The bottom 10 per cent have nothing but debt (Marks, Headey and Wooden 2005). In the UK, 2004 official statistics show that the top 1 per cent owned 23 per cent of national wealth, an increase of three per cent since 1997 when the first New Labour government was elected. The top 10 per cent have own more than 50 per cent of national wealth, and the wealthiest 50 per cent own 94 per cent of national wealth. Over the same period the wealth of the poorest 50 per cent of the population contracted from 10 per cent in 1986 to 5 per cent in 2002. As with the US figures, the data suggests that the trend of decreasing wealth inequality is being reversed. In 1911 it is estimated that the share of the top 1 per cent of the population was 70 per cent of national wealth. By 1936–38 it had fallen to 56 per cent; by 1960 it stood at 42 per cent; and in 1991 it had more than halved to 17 per cent. However, since the mid 1990s the richest 1 per cent have gained a further 6 per cent of national wealth, despite New Labour's commitment to distributive justice ([www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)). The UK government defines poverty as an income that is 60 per cent of the median. On this basis, it is estimated that 21 per cent of children and pensioners and 14 per cent of all adults live below the poverty line. At the other end of the wealth ladder, it is estimated that the average annual income of a UK Chief Executive in the Finance, Business and Industry sectors of the economy was £600,000 ([www.esrc.ac.uk](http://www.esrc.ac.uk)).

It used to be argued seriously that the primary identifying characteristics of leisure are freedom, choice and self determination (Parker 1981). However, if one compares these characteristics against the data on class, sexual, racial, gender and ethical inequality, the argument ceases to hold water. As with all human relations to scarcity, individuals and groups are positioned in structurally distinct ways in relation to leisure resources. Leisure Studies must relate the real choice, freedom and scope for self-determination that people have in relation to their access to scarce resources. This means examining

leisure as a state of being rather than a state of mind. The relation of individuals and groups to scarcity positions the quality, duration and options of leisure experience.

## The Ambitions of the Collection

The study of leisure has reached a stage of academic maturity in which several Handbooks offering a critical survey of the field (7). This Collection of published material supplements the Handbook model, by presenting a distillation of the most seminal contributions to the field. It aims to provide readers with a perception of the origins of Leisure Studies, the inter-disciplinary mix in the field, the basic concepts, key controversies and an agenda for research. The selection is obviously personal. Nonetheless, I have tried to step outside my own interests, which are in the cultural sociology of leisure, to give readers a reliable guide to terrain. It is designed to be a research and teaching resource. I am presenting readers with various paths through a literature base that, for one reason or another, has grown so dense and many-sided that it resembles a jungle.

It is in the nature of critical surveys to offer some thoughts about emergent issues and the horizon of development. These thoughts fall into three categories: institutional; politics;

### 1. Institutional

The study of leisure attained its greatest public profile in the era of post-industrial society theory and the Leisure Society thesis. The latter provided Leisure Studies with a 'big idea' to catapult leisure from the sidelines of academic enquiry to centre stage. The idea that technology and ethical management were combining to produce a conflict-free transition from the work ethic to the society of leisure made the study of leisure attractive and pertinent.

The collapse of the Leisure Society thesis produced awkward questions about the relevance of Leisure Studies. In part, these were answered by the emergence of new sub-fields of enquiry, notably Sports Studies/Sciences and Tourism Studies. These new areas redistributed teaching and research resources away from the study of leisure *per se*, to specialized activities within the field of leisure. In effect this was a process of internal diversification in which parts of what used to be considered leisure divided and developed distinctive and diversified pedagogies, research boundaries and academic hierarchies. As is the case with all new areas of teaching and research, they sought to rapidly demonstrate credibility and relevance. Quantitative data and audit methodologies were applied. In Sports Science the value of sports coaching, biomechanic development and motivation training to fitness and competitive performance were measured and demonstrated. In Tourism Studies methods of evaluating sustainability, determining the cost-benefit

ratio of investment in tourism and determining destination imagery were exploited and refined. By no means were qualitative issues excluded from these trajectories of expansion. Sports Science developed a range of agendas and research questions about sport and politics, corporate control and manipulation of sporting events and inequality, access and participation (Cashmore 2005). For its part Tourism Studies, developed fronts of debate and research around sex tourism in the emerging and developing world, the commodification of tourist experience and alternative tourism (Wylie 2000). Yet these qualitative questions generally took second place to the questions of 'hard science' handled by quantitative methodologies and data analysis.

By contrast, the study of leisure has always carried with it grander allusions to the good life. These have to do with the personal, cultural and social benefits of what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) calls 'flow'. That is, the psychological condition in which internal motivation connects with the opportunities and challenges of the external world to achieve a state of pure connection. In the condition of flow individuals (and groups) lose sense of time and place and experience powerful sentiments of fulfilment and life satisfaction. This raises the separate question, which Csikszentmihalyi (1990) does not address, concerning the social, economic and cultural conditions that would enable flow to be experienced not as a want or interlude, but a staple of life.

Of course, these matters are subject to quantitative analysis. However, they constantly pose issues that are of a philosophical, sociological, political, cultural and qualitative nature. What is the right balance between work and leisure? What do freedom, choice and self-determination mean in societies based upon organized inequality? How does popular entertainment relate to social improvement? These are not matters that can be settled over-night. They demand the connection of issues of leisure to much broader questions of scarcity, access, representation, resistance and dissent. The study of leisure ultimately leads to the topics of what kind of social order we have constructed and the type of conditions that will deliver more enriching, satisfying experience.

A separate aspect of this that needs to be addressed is the academic division of labour in Leisure Science/Leisure Studies. The USA is overwhelmingly, the biggest player. The number of specialist departments and trained personnel engaged in the study of leisure far out-weighs any other nation. While the intent of US leisure educators is generally benign, it carries unarticulated assumptions about 'normal' leisure forms and practices that are embedded around the idea of the 'American way'.

## 2. Politics

Within the Social Sciences there has been a long tradition of debate about fact-value distinctions (8). The capacity of academic study to be objective and value free remains disputed. In the study of leisure, these matters have not

been so thoroughly addressed. Although Fred Coalter (1999) has put his finger upon some significant regime distinctions in the field in the course of his comparison of Leisure Studies and Leisure Sciences. The latter nomenclature is the primary way of describing the academic analysis of leisure in the USA. It privileges quantitative methodologies, cognitive theory and empiricist investigation. Leisure is twinned with voluntarism and the research focus is upon the satisfaction and benefits of leisure forms and practice. The study of leisure activity is separated from questions of scarcity, power and domination. By contrast, Leisure Studies operates with a mixed methods model and assigns greater significance to qualitative enquiry. Leisure is twinned with inequality and the research focus is upon how types of leisure activity are positioned in relation to scarcity, power and domination. Questions of freedom and choice are related to representation, coding and hegemony (Coalter 1999: 508).

A variety of global problems are combining to enhance the significance of political questions in the study of leisure. The topics of environmental pollution, climate change and the development gap have already been mentioned. To these we should add the requirement to create a new framework of financial regulation in order to avoid the credit crunch and labour market instability of the economic crash of 2008; bi-lateral and multi-lateral strategies to address the illegal downloading of intellectual property as a leisure resource associated with the spread of the computer and internet society; the usurpation of leisure forms and practices of marginal peoples by the colonial state in the economically advanced countries and the newly industrializing periphery; and appropriate regulatory policies to control the activities of multinational corporations involved in the production of leisure commodities that are harmful to physical, mental and social wellbeing such as tobacco, alcohol and guns.

### 3. Global Inequality

In the 1980s and 1990s globalization and deregulation resulted in the outsourcing of many lies of leisure production from the economically advanced nations to the emerging and developing world. In the Age of Empire the advanced world systematically appropriated wealth from the developing and emerging countries. It was not quite one-way traffic since the colonizing countries also built up economic infrastructure, invested in education and introduced a legal rational system of law. Even so, the balance of power was overwhelmingly in favour of the core capitalist nations.

Today the balance of power remains weighted in favour of the West. The cheap labour resources of the emerging and developing countries provide the basis of supply for leisure goods in the economically advanced countries. The relationship between the pleasure accumulating demands of the economically advanced countries and the cheap labour markets and gangs in Asia, Latin America and Africa points to global circuits of exploitation and

oppression that the Western leisure industry reinforces and develops. The role of the leisure industry in global de-regulation of labour markets is an urgent area of leisure enquiry.

If publications like the volumes at hand, help to challenge the common-sense idea that leisure is about freedom, choice and self-determination they will have done their service to the community. Part of the challenge in the twenty first century is to re-formulate the Western concept of leisure so as to illuminate the ideological connotations embedded in it. Leisure forms and practice are *positioned* in relation to power and scarcity. Our understanding of what leisure means, and how it develops, can only be enhanced if we seriously address the mechanics and processes of positioning.

## Notes

1. Several issues are raised by the debate on pluralism and lifestyle. Some of the issues have been covered in the collection by reproducing the articles by Veal and his critics. However, space has prevented me from including Veal's rejoinder. Interested readers should consult: Veal, A.J. (1989) 'Lifestyle, leisure and Pluralism – A Response', *Leisure Studies* 8(3), 213–218.

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