Loisir et Société
Society and Leisure

Leisure, Culture and Lifestyle
Loisir, culture et mode de vie
Diversión, cultura y estilo de vida

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Résumé de l'article

Dans cet article, nous étudions la place qu'occupe le concept de *lifestyle* (mode de vie) dans les études sur le loisir, à partir de trois ouvrages publiés récemment. Dans *Leisure and Contemporary Society,* Ken Roberts (1999) conclut que le mode de vie n'a pas sa place comme concept-clé dans les études sur le loisir puisqu'il n'a pas remplacé les facteurs tels que l'âge, le genre et la classe sociale lorsqu'il s'agit de procurer aux individus un sentiment d'identité. Dans *Leisure and Culture*, Chris Rojek (2000) analyse les traits distinctifs dominants du corpus théorique de l'étude / la sociologie des loisirs au cours des 30 dernières années et il est d'avis que l'étude des cultures, bien qu'elle ait grandement influencé les études sur le loisir, s'est en pratique préoccupé des classes sociales. Ainsi il est d'avis qu'un nouveau regard sur la *culture* permettrait à l'étude / la sociologie des loisirs de faire un pas en avant. Steven Miles (2000), dans *Youth Lifestyles in a Changing World*, suggère que le concept de *sous-culture,* auquel on a eu traditionnellement recours dans les études portant sur la jeunesse, a été compromis du fait qu'il était associé aux paradigmes structurels néo-marxistes de la tradition des études sur la culture des années 80 et 90 et que, par conséquent, c'est le concept de *lifestyle* qui conviendrait davantage à l'étude de la vie des jeunes d'aujourd'hui. À la lumière de ces récentes publications et d'autres contributions récentes à la théorie des loisirs, il ressort de cet article que le concept de *lifestyle* demeure utile et qu'il peut largement contribuer à faire progresser la réflexion dans le domaine des études sur le loisir.

LEISURE, CULTURE AND LIFESTYLE

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Introduction

The concept of lifestyle has a long history in numerous disciplines and fields of study, including leisure studies. But in the latter context, despite a growing literature, it has generally been marginalised from the mainstream of theoretical debate and empirical enquiry. This paper provides a brief review of the "underground existence" of the lifestyle concept, with particular reference to the British leisure studies tradition since the 1970s. It then reviews some of the more recent contributions to leisure theory, notably those by Roberts and Rojek, and explores the relationships between these developments and the concept of lifestyle. The aim in the paper is not to rehearse the features of the concept of lifestyle, which has been done extensively elsewhere (Veal, 1993, 2000), but to explore the relationship between the concept of lifestyle and what might be termed mainstream leisure theory.

A major feature of the history of leisure studies has been the quest to explain variations in patterns of leisure participation among individuals and groups of individuals. The earliest approaches to explanation of leisure behaviour, in the 1960s, simply related participation to variables such as age, income and social class, leading to quantitative, "econometric" style statistical modelling of demand (Christensen, 1988). While such modelling produced quite low levels of statistical explanation in North America (Kelly, 1980), British experiments were more promising (Settle, 1977; Veal, 1987); nevertheless, among sociologists, this approach was seen as somewhat sterile and lacking in theoretical underpinning. This research tradition might, on the face of it, appear to have little to do with the idea of lifestyle, but in fact, some of the early work on "leisure styles" by Proctor (1962) has clear links with subsequent research on the same theme (eg. Gunter and Gunter, 1980; Kelly, 1983; Glyptis, 1981), which has clear links with later work on the concept of lifestyle. In Britain in the 1970s, the major contributors to the development of

the sociology of leisure did not generally relate their ideas to the idea of lifestyle but, in relating leisure behaviour to the wider contexts of work (Parker, 1971), social class (Young and Wilmott, 1973) and the "family life-cycle" (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1975), they laid the foundations for considering leisure in a broad social context.

The most significant development in the field in 1970s Britain was the emergence of a neo-Marxist analysis of leisure studies from within cultural studies, culminating in the publication of Clarke and Critcher's *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain* (1985), which placed a Marxist class analysis at the centre of its theoretical model. Equally significant was the rejection of this approach by Ken Roberts, in his book *Contemporary Society and the Growth of Leisure* (1978), in favour of what he called a "pluralist" perspective. This he explained as follows.

> In Britain and other Western societies there exists a variety of taste publics that possess contrasting interests generated by their different circumstances. ... In recreation and other spheres the public uses its leisure to nurture life-styles that supply experiences which the individuals concerned seek and value. "Freedom from" is a condition of leisure. But there is also a positive side of the coin that involves individuals exploiting their "freedom to" and leads logically to socio-cultural pluralism, meaning societies in which various taste publics are able to fashion life-styles reflecting their different interests and circumstances (Roberts, 1978, p. 86).

The implicit challenge of Roberts' approach was to operationalise the concept of lifestyle. A considerable volume of literature did indeed appear during the 1970s, some proposing lifestyle as a theoretical concept and some exploring the idea empirically. Most of this work, however, appeared in fields other than leisure studies, including such diverse areas as: studies of migrant communities (Pryce, 1979); urban studies (Marshall, 1973; Miller and Sjöberg, l973); market research (Wells, 1974); futurology (Toffler, 1970, p. 276-293); community politics (Page and Clelland, 1978); tourism (MacCannell, 1976, 6, p. 31-2); and social theory in general (Bell, 1976, xxiv, p. 36, 38; Feldman and Thielbar, 1972; Filipcova, 1972; Gans, 1974, p. 68-9). Simmel's (1976) theoretical discussion of style of life should also be noted here; although originally published at the beginning of the century, it became available in English translation at this time.

The lifestyle concept in the 1980s

During the 1980s, the concept of lifestyle received further attention from sociologists concerned with social structure in general (eg. Sobel, 1981; Bourdieu, 1980; Scheys, 1987) and a number of commentators drew attention to the potential of the concept for leisure studies. Chris Rojek (1985, p. 73) stated that "one of Weber's most durable legacies to the sociology of leisure is the concept of lifestyle." Significant contributions to the debate were made by Tokarski (1984,

1985), Paré (1985), Ouellet (1981) and Sue (1986). Gattas *et al*. (1986, p. 3) put forward an agenda for research in leisure and lifestyle and drew attention to "... the attraction of the life-style 'bridge', with its promise to unravel the interconnections between an individual's leisure experience and the larger social order". Chaney (1987) concluded that, if sociologists were to progress in "disentangling the cultural significance of different forms of leisure ... we will have to work on the constitution of Life-worlds and Life-styles". de la Durantaye (1988) called for multidisciplinary research on leisure and lifestyle and Moorhouse (1989, p. 31) argued that "... the concepts of status group and lifestyle could be one way to a more academically sophisticated and adequate analysis" of leisure. At the end of the 1980s, a substantial collection of papers on the topic was published by Research Committee 13 of the International Sociological Association (Filipcova, Glyptis and Tokarski, 1990).

There was, however, resistance to the use of the lifestyle concept: a 1989 paper published in *Leisure Studies*, suggesting that a Weberian approach to lifestyle could provide a framework for the development of leisure studies (Veal, 1989a, 1989b) was firmly rejected by neo-Marxist (Critcher, 1989) and feminist (Scraton and Talbot, 1989) scholars and has continued to be dismissed by critical sociologists (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994, p. 79-80) and feminists (Wearing, 1998, p. 11-14).

The lifestyle concept in the 1990s

Despite this criticism, support for the lifestyle concept continued to grow during the 1990s. Mommaas (1999) related the concept to the work of Veblen, Weber and Simmel; Critcher appeared to modify his earlier position in suggesting that lifestyle was one of a number of "middle range" concepts which should be explored in leisure studies (Critcher, 1992, p. 120); a number of contributions to the discussion were made by Paré (1992, 1993); Rojek (1997, p. 388) suggested that the concept had survived some of its structural feminist critiques; and a substantial review of the concept was published in the journal *Leisure Studies* (Veal, 1993). In a book-length treatment of the subject, David Chaney concluded that:

> ... the social phenomenon of lifestyles has been an integral feature of the development of modernity, not least in the idea that lifestyles are a particularly significant representation of the quest for individual identity that is also such a defining characteristic of modernity (Chaney, 1996, p. 158).

The lifestyle concept today

Two publications which bring the debate on lifestyle up to date are discussed here, namely: Ken Roberts' *Leisure in Contemporary Society* (1999) and Steven Miles' *Youth Lifestyles in a Changing World* (2000).

In *Leisure in Contemporary Society*, Roberts (1999) reaffirms his earlier rejection of "grand theories", such as Marxism and structural feminism, and favours a neo-liberal view of leisure choice in which market processes are seen to give expression to, and to meet, most of people's leisure needs and wants. In searching for a theoretical framework to analyse this situation, he presents two chapters, one on "Consumption and Consumerism" and one on "Lifestyles and Identities". In the chapter on consumption and consumerism, Roberts rejects the theoretical perspective which sees consumers as being passive victims of manipulative marketers; rather, he argues that consumers have genuine choice and that suppliers in the contemporary competitive marketplace effectively meet people's leisure needs. It is notable, however, that this analysis, as presented, is basically economic rather than sociological. In mainstream economic theory, the efficiency and effectiveness of the market are seen to be based on some fairly simplistic – though not necessarily wholly wrong – assumptions about individual consumers' motivations (the basis of the terms "economic rationalism" and "economic man"): the social dimension is largely neglected.

In the chapter on lifestyles and identities, Roberts rejects the proposition that the phenomenon of lifestyle can replace social class, gender and age as the basic structuring concept in leisure analysis. In fact, most analyses of lifestyle involve age, gender and social class (in the sense of a variable based on occupation) as key components but, in developing his critique, Roberts seems to go so far as to deny altogether the usefulness of the concept of lifestyle in the study of leisure. His argument is based on a number of observations about the lifestyle concept, including the question of whether it is a new concept, whether it transcends class, its stability, questions of style and identity, particularly youth identities, and its value compared with traditional analyses using age, gender and social class. These topics are discussed in turn below.

1. *Is it new?* Roberts refers to commentators on consumerism and post-modernism who argue that lifestyle is a new or growing social phenomenon. He correctly points out that the *idea* of lifestyle dates at least back to Weber and that recognisable lifestyle groups have existed in earlier times, such as the "mods" and "hippies" in 1960s Britain (although most would contrast "mods" with "rockers") and "flappers" and "bohemians" in the inter-war years. He could have gone back even further to the "*flâneurs*" (Wearing and Wearing, 1996) and "larrikins" (Veal and Lynch, 2001, p. 394) of the 19th century and no doubt to similar groups in former ages. But in fact, the lifestyle idea does not have to be new for it to be valid or useful. Lifestyle may be particularly symbiotic with notions of consumerism and postmodernism, but so are other phenomena, such as symbols, design and depthlessness. These are not new ideas either but are seen as valid and useful in analysing contemporary society.

2. *Intra-class or cross-class?* Roberts refers to research in which lifestyle groups have indeed been identified, but have generally been identifiable groups *within* traditional social classes, and invariably middle or upper-class groups (p. 200-03; p. 210-13). Thus, while conceding that the phenomenon of lifestyle might exist, Roberts concludes that it is restricted to the relatively well-off and highly educated who have economic and cultural resources to indulge themselves. But whether lifestyle groups are entirely intra-class, mostly intra-class or largely cross-class is at present an empirical question. Similarly, how lifestyle groups relate to gender and age is an empirical question. Few academic studies have the resources to conduct the necessary detailed empirical research across all sections of the community to address these issues. Some of the census-based exercises and commercial market research studies are able to do this (see Veal, 1993, p. 237), but even these studies are limited in the range of data which they can gather and the style of analysis which they can undertake. In general they tend to suggest that lifestyle groups are intra-class, but not entirely. So, again, the possibility that lifestyle groups might be largely class, gender or age-based does not invalidate the lifestyle idea.

3. *Instability*. Roberts suggests that, in the postmodern condition, characterised by a rapidly changing cultural environment, the bases from which people might construct lifestyles are unstable, and therefore such lifestyles would themselves be unstable. This he sees as "threatening" or likely to wreak "devastation across leisure" (p. 205-6). But the desirability or otherwise of increased instability in people's lives is not relevant to the question of the relevance of the lifestyle concept itself. If life is becoming increasingly ephemeral and unstable and if certain approaches to lifestyle analysis "fit" with this trend, this would suggest that lifestyle is indeed a useful analytical tool for the current era. It is also worth noting that instability is not a new phenomenon which social scientists are suddenly confronted with. It is arguable that, since the industrial revolution in the West, a number of phenomena have resulted in instability being the norm, including urbanisation, industrialisation, economic boom and slump, technological change, the wars experienced by most generations and substantial changes in cultural mores. At the individual level, change is also endemic, as a result of such factors as moving through stages in the lifecycle, job changes, partner changes and house moving. All of this is likely to cause changes in lifestyle to varying degrees. Thus the fact that we may be dealing with a concept which is itself in a constant state of flux would seem to be a strength rather than a weakness. This is particularly true of young people, as Miles (2000, p. 157) concludes from his own studies of British youth:

> Just because lifestyles do not provide the stable sorts of identities other forms of social support may have done in the past does not mean that they do not represent a fundamental influence on identity construction.

> Social change is such that the very nature and indeed role of identity has changed and young people have changed with it. ... Young people do call upon their lifestyles to construct who it is they are precisely because lifestyles provide them with the flexibility they need. ... The fact that lifestyles are unstable actively helps them to cope with the instabilities and uncertainties of social change.

4. *Style*. Roberts refers to British research which indicates that most shoppers do not see themselves as selecting purchases on the basis of "style" but on the basis of cost and use value, thus they cannot be said to be constructing a lifestyle through their consumption activities. Earlier US studies of living room composition suggest, however, that people do adopt certain recognisable styles in domestic furnishing and decoration (Davis, 1955; Junker, 1955; Laumann and House, 1970). The extent to which aesthetic style is or is not adopted, consciously or unconsciously, in domestic design and fashion is, then, another empirical question surely worthy of further research.

5. *Identity*. Roberts argues that people, and young people in particular, do not consciously identify with lifestyle groups; he refers to research in which young people insist that they are just "ordinary" and do not see themselves as belonging to identifiable groups. The question of group identity is an interesting and complex one. Some lifestyle models, such as those constructed on the basis of psychographic market research, are not dependent on conscious identification of the individual with a lifestyle group; membership is ascribed, based on demographic, economic, consumption and attitude data. If research on group identity was to rely solely on single-answer responses to survey questions, we would have to accept an increasingly dominating "middle class". In fact, more detailed social class groupings are routinely ascribed based on occupational categories. So again, unanswered questions about group identity are a matter for further research on lifestyle rather than a reason for dismissing the concept. The question of youth identity is discussed further below.

6. *The role of leisure*. In part of his discussion, Roberts seeks to rebut claims that *leisure* can be the main source of an individual's identity (p. 212-3). He appears to believe that the concept of lifestyle implies some sort of primacy for the role of leisure, and therefore concludes that if this primacy is denied then the validity of the lifestyle concept will be undermined. However, for most models of lifestyle, this is far from the case. Attempts at empirical operationalisation of lifestyle generally see leisure as just one component of the phenomenon, along with socio-economic and lifecycle position, geographical factors, occupation, consumption patterns, attitudes and so on. Thus lifestyle, far from giving primacy to leisure, can be seen as a means of "decentring" leisure and viewing it as just one component of life.

7. *Youth*. Roberts focuses particularly on youth in his discussion of lifestyle, relating all the above arguments to young people, and concluding that the

concept of lifestyle does not help in understanding young people's leisure behaviour. In this he is directly challenged by Steven Miles, who, on the basis of his research on consumption, attitudes and leisure behaviour of young people, concludes:

> Youth lifestyles do play an important role in young people's lives, precisely because young people actively perceive lifestyle to be important. ... Young people use their lifestyles to navigate the structural-cultural dilemmas of social change (Miles, 2000, p. 159).

8. *Social class, age and sex*. Finally, Roberts argues that lifestyle is not necessary as an analytical tool because traditional analysis provides all the explanation that is needed.

> The main differences in leisure behaviour are still by social class, age and sex. The principal conclusions from conventional leisure research are still proving robust. Sex, age and socio-economic status continue to be related to clear leisure differences; clearer than the differences between intra-class lifestyle groups that have been identified in existing research (Roberts, 1999, p. 212).

This is arguably Roberts' most important comment because it is a statement not just of his conclusions about the value of lifestyle but also about how the study of leisure should proceed. It is a recipe for what might be called a *pragmatic/ empirical* approach, with little reference to theory. It proposes that knowing a person's age, occupation and gender is enough to differentiate and "explain" their leisure behaviour. Although Roberts does not suggest that we should rely only on statistical analysis of such relationships, the approach appears to take us back to the quantitative modelling of the 1960s and 1970s, in which "explanation" was equated with "statistical explanation". Such an approach to explanation, if validated by statistical data, can be very useful for some purposes. For example, to be able to predict the level of participation in a given activity among a group on the basis of the age, gender and social class composition of the group can be useful for both social policy and commercial marketing. But, as indicated in the Appendix, however statistically reliable such models might be, sociologically, they tend to leave as much unexplained as they explain. In the example in the Appendix, variations in the level of participation in an activity can be predicted for different age/gender groups with a high level of probability – the model offers a high level of statistical "explanation". But within any one age/gender group, the model does not explain the difference between the x % who participate and the (100-x) % who do not.

Regardless of the statistics, anecdotally we are all aware of individuals with apparently identical socio-economic characteristics, who nevertheless have very different patterns of leisure behaviour. How is this to be explained? The theoretical problem with the pragmatic/ empirical approach is that it does not offer an explanation of different behaviour patterns within groups. Lifestyle analysis may offer such further levels of explanation, by exploring patterns *within* such age/gender/

class groups or by presenting altogether different clusterings of social, demographic and behavioural variables. There is a substantial and growing literature which offers theoretical insights into the process of lifestyle formation (Veal, 2000).

Lifestyle and culture

In the brief review of the recent history of the sociology of leisure in Britain given at the beginning of this paper, it was noted that, during the 1970s and 1980s, the neo-Marxist, cultural studies paradigm associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University – the "Birmingham School" – came to the fore. In relation to this period, Chris Rojek, in his recent book *Leisure and Culture*, makes the following observation:

> ... the Birmingham School appears to predicate its entire programme of enquiry in the concept [culture]. However this is deceptive. Culture is given little autonomy in the Birmingham School literature because it is viewed as the reflection of hegemony which depends ultimately upon the class struggle (Rojek, 2000, p. 113).

Rojek is here highlighting the paradox that, despite the significance of this development, and despite the fact that it came from the Centre for Contemporary *Cultural* Studies, the focus of the Birmingham School's contribution to leisure studies was on *class* rather than culture per se. Steven Miles refers to similar criticism of the Birmingham School in relation to research on youth subcultures He observes that the mode of analysis used by CCCS saw youth subcultures as either a non-resistant, passive, subset of the dominant culture (i.e. subject to hegemonic control) or as a resistant to it (i.e. resisting hegemonic control). Thus youth subcultures were analysed primarily to establish whether they were passive or resistant – and mostly it was groups that displayed resistant behaviour that were studied. The behaviour of the groups was only of interest insofar as it demonstrated resistance. Some feminist research has adopted a similar approach (e.g. Wearing, 1990). Largely because of this history, Miles concludes: "... the notion of youth *lifestyles* is now potentially more useful than that of youth subcultures" (Miles, 2000, p.7). But, while Miles favours the use of the term lifestyle rather than subculture, it is clear that there is considerable overlap between the two concepts. Indeed, another researcher in the youth area, while similarly rejecting the Birmingham School approach, nevertheless retains the word culture, but using the term *taste cultures* to describe the life patterns of differing youth groups (Thornton summarised in Rojek, 2000, p. 96-9). These commentators seem to be searching for a suitable term to reflect the fluid, consumption-based clusters of characteristics, behaviour, taste and attitudes which characterise groups of people in modern society. It would seem that the term lifestyle has become the more widely accepted. Thus in conceptually displacing subculture as the building block of culture, lifestyle can be said to have renewed the link between leisure studies and cultural studies.

Rojek draws on anthropological sources and classic leisure studies sources such as Huizinga to argue for the crucial relationship between culture and leisure activity. He states: "Human culture did not begin with the need to work, it began with language, dancing, laughing, acting, mimicking, ritual and a variety of play forms" (Rojek, 2000, p. 115) and, further: "... most of the popular leisure forms today can be understood more accurately through the prism of culture rather than class analysis" (Rojek, 2000, p. 102). Rojek goes on to expound two theoretical ideas which offer useful constructs for further theoretical and empirical work in the overlapping fields of leisure, culture and lifestyle.

In the opening chapter of *Leisure and Culture*, Rojek explores the idea of culture as being *performative*. Drawing on anthropological theory and the work of Goffman, Lyotard and others, Rojek draws attention to the way culture is sustained by the way individuals learn to *perform* appropriate social roles according to the rules of behaviour which have evolved as defining those roles. The work of Goffman and Lyotard relates primarily to patterns of behaviour in the workplace; so the rules of performance which they identify relate to particular occupations and can therefore be seen as structural forces used by those in power within organisations to exercise organisational control and, more broadly, to maintain class boundaries and distinctions. While such rules of behaviour have historically developed in the context of work culture, they can also apply to social and domestic roles and to leisure behaviour. It is notable that Goffman frequently uses non-work situations to illustrate his propositions (e.g. Goffman, 1959, p. 29, 61, 83). As Rojek (2000, p. 48-9) puts it: "... work-performance disciplines carry over into our non-work emotional relations and leisure activity... We perform in our leisure, just as we do in our work." Rojek is concerned with exploring the extent to which the rules of performance which exist outside the workplace are centrally imposed means of social control, but concludes that the situation is more diffuse and decentralised than many commentators have suggested. However, he does not take the next step, which is suggested here, that such rules of performance may evolve within lifestyle groups. We only need to think of certain high profile youth groups, such as those referred to by Roberts above, to realise that the combination of dress style, hairstyle, speech, music and dance tastes and "attitude" that characterise such groups can be seen as the *rules of performance* of the group. Other lifestyle groups are perhaps more fluid and less clearly identifiable to the outside observer, but it is possible that the rules of performance are equally forceful for group members. The idea of identifying rules of performance as a means of identifying lifestyle groups and the mechanisms by which such groups form and maintain themselves is a potentially fruitful line of research.

The second concept which Rojek puts forward which is relevant to our discussion here is the idea of *reservation*, which refers to a "... threshold of social diffidence in relations with others, especially strangers" (Rojek, 2000, p. 129). While such social mechanisms developed in the context of such institutions as tribe,

family and nation, they are now deployed in the process of people forming and identifying with myriads of groups, and socially or culturally excluding non-members. In this respect, the concept parallels the discussion of the "Other" put forward by Aitchison (2000). While Rojek discusses this tendency in the context of late modernity (or "Modernity 2"), it can also be seen as relating to the fractured social structures of postmodernity and certainly to the phenomenon of lifestyle. Rojek relates the idea to the idea of modern "tribal" groups, and observes:

> Judgements of commonality and difference are characteristics of all social groups. ... Social groups develop elaborate social protocols to cool-out people who are "Non-U"[1] The details differ according to precise historical and cultural circumstances. This sense of social reservation connects up closely with the postmodern argument that contemporary culture has fragmented into an array of interest and identity groups which lack social cohesion (Rojek, 2000, p. 131).

Much of the research on lifestyles fails to extend very far beyond the empirical identification of lifestyle groups based on a static view of behaviour, consumption patterns and socio-demographic characteristics. What is missing is a fully developed dynamic theoretical framework to explain how such groups emerge, construct a particular identity, sustain themselves and then, invariably, decline. The two concepts discussed above, *performativity* and *reservation*, while clearly not constituting a complete theoretical model, suggest social mechanisms by which lifestyles and lifestyle groups might be created and sustained.

Conclusion

Despite the extensive and growing literature on the topic (Veal, 1993, 2000), lifestyle is far from being a fully-fledged theoretical and empirical tool: it is work in progress. Over the last thirty years the idea has had a somewhat marginal existence alongside mainstream sociological leisure theory. But the idea has refused to go away and, from the above discussion, it is arguable that it continues to have a significant role to play in the field of leisure studies. Indeed, faced with the alternatives of largely discredited structuralist models and the empirical and theoretical limitations of pragmatic empirical approaches, the concept of lifestyle would appear to be one of the few available creative routes open for the future development of sociological leisure studies.

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NOTE

1. The expressions "U" and "Non-U" date from the 1930s and refer to people who are, or are not, part of the "in crowd" or, as Rojek (2000, p. 130) puts it, to "people who are immediately recognized as 'one of us' or 'not one of us'. "

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Statistical explanation versus sociological explanation

The proposition that statistical explanation is not necessarily the same thing as sociological explanation is best demonstrated with an example. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the activity of going to the pub and age and gender in Australia. Pub-going was selected because it is known to be affected by age and gender and because the level of participation provides a substantial sample size, from within a general social survey, for analysis purposes. Regression analysis of the data in Figure 1 gives a very high value of R^2 of 0.97, suggesting that age and gender alone have, in statistical terms, "explained" the pattern of pub-going.

FIGURE 1

**Pub-going by age and gender,
Australia, Summer 1991**
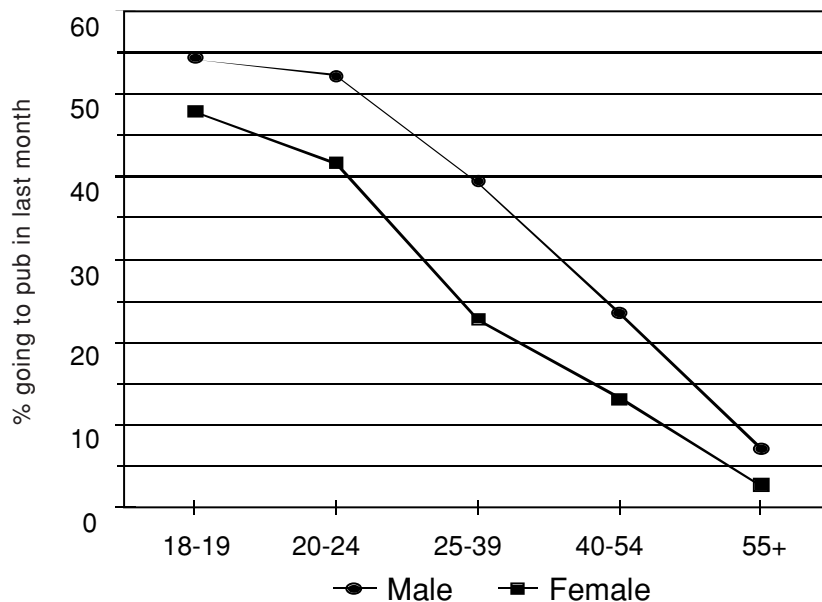
Data source: Australian National Recreation Participation Survey, 1991

Examination of the chart shows that, for the over 55s, age and gender alone predict that 97% of females and 93% of males *do not* visit pubs. Some qualitative explanation of why this is so is clearly called for, but analysis using age and gender alone has achieved a great deal. But for all other groups, we are far from "explaining" behaviour. For the most active group, males aged 18-19, it can be seen that some 55% attended a pub in the last month – but 45% did not. Thus, for this and

most of the other age/gender groups, while these two variables predict a specific percentage level of attendance for the group, they do not explain why some individuals within the group attend and others do not. The statistics have only explained the *variation* in pub-going between groups, not the *level* of pub-going. If social class, based on occupation, is added to the analysis, the situation is not materially changed (see Table 1). Within age/sex/socio-economic status groups the level of pub-going varies somewhat among social class groups, but not dramatically. Excluding the cells with no data (resulting from sample size limitations), about two thirds of the cells contain estimates of participation in the range 20-80%, suggesting that age, gender and socio-economic status fails to explain the behaviour of at least 20% of the members of the group.

TABLE 1
Pub-going in Australia by economic status, gender and age, Summer, 1991

	Retired	Not Employed	Full-time Student	Full-time Home Duties	Manager	Profess-sional/ technical	Foreman/ Supervisor/ Trades	Clerical/ Sales	Manual	Total
% of group participating in month prior to interview										
Male										
18-19	–	42.9	33.3	–	85.7	63.6	57.1	68.8	31.6	52.1
20-24	100.0	44.1	–	100.0	27.3	45.7	34.5	45.9	34.8	39.3
25-39	–	39.1	100.0	–	28.9	14.3	28.1	20.8	17.9	23.5
40-54	8.0	20.0	–	–	–	8.3	6.7	–	–	7.2
55+	8.2	40.7	20.6	16.7	31.1	36.0	33.0	39.6	26.9	28.3
N	184	91	97	6	74	164	197	101	108	1022
Female										
18-19	–	12.5	58.3	31.6	–	78.6	60.0	44.8	–	41.6
20-24	–	16.7	25.0	12.6	33.3	30.7	62.5	30.2	12.5	22.8
25-39	28.6	22.2	–	10.0	–	13.6	11.1	12.2	23.5	13.2
40-54	3.0	–	–	2.4	–	–	–	11.1	–	2.8
55+	4.3	18.9	25.6	10.8	18.8	29.3	38.5	26.3	14.6	17.4
N	140	53	78	378	16	140	26	171	41	1043

– no information, largely due to sample size limitations. N.B. all percentages subject to large confidence intervals because of sample size.

It could be argued that beyond this level of detail we move outside the realm of sociology and move into the realm of psychology or social-psychology. It might be, for example, that different patterns of behaviour are explained by personality. However, there are levels of sociological analysis which lie between the broad socio-economic groups discussed above and the individual level of psychology. One such "finer" level of analysis is subcultural studies. There is a substantial body

of research on subcultural groups in the leisure studies/cultural studies field, particularly among young people. In such studies, it is not assumed that, say, all 15 year-old working class males have similar patterns of leisure – indeed, it is the very differences in such patterns *within* such socio-economic groups which is the focus of the research.

Indeed, statistically, it is virtually impossible to improve on an R^2 of 0.97. Further "drilling down" into the data, to include, for example, parenthood or car-ownership, is unlikely to change the situation very much. In practice, we rapidly reach the statistical limits of most data-sets in this type of analysis: for example, analysis by gender, age and social class, with five age groups and five social class groups, involves breaking the sample down into 50 sub-samples (2 x 5 x 5). Dividing further into, say, those with and without dependant children would produce 100 subsamples.

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Tony VEAL
Loisir, culture et mode de vie

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article, nous étudions la place qu'occupe le concept de *lifestyle* (mode de vie) dans les études sur le loisir, à partir de trois ouvrages publiés récemment. Dans *Leisure and Contemporary Society,* Ken Roberts (1999) conclut que le mode de vie n'a pas sa place comme concept-clé dans les études sur le loisir puisqu'il n'a pas remplacé les facteurs tels que l'âge, le genre et la classe sociale lorsqu'il s'agit de procurer aux individus un sentiment d'identité. Dans *Leisure and Culture*, Chris Rojek (2000) analyse les traits distinctifs dominants du corpus théorique de l'étude / la sociologie des loisirs au cours des 30 dernières années et il est d'avis que l'étude des cultures, bien qu'elle ait grandement influencé les études sur le loisir, s'est en pratique préoccupé des classes sociales. Ainsi il est d'avis qu'un nouveau regard sur la *culture* permettrait à l'étude / la sociologie des loisirs de faire un pas en avant. Steven Miles (2000), dans *Youth Lifestyles in a Changing World*, suggère que le concept de *sous-culture*, auquel on a eu traditionnellement recours dans les études portant sur la jeunesse, a été compromis du fait qu'il était associé aux paradigmes structurels néo-marxistes de la tradition des études sur la culture des années 80 et 90 et que, par conséquent, c'est le concept de *lifestyle* qui conviendrait davantage à l'étude de la vie des jeunes d'aujourd'hui. À la lumière de ces récentes publications et d'autres contributions récentes à la théorie des loisirs, il ressort de cet article que le concept de *lifestyle* demeure utile et qu'il peut largement contribuer à faire progresser la réflexion dans le domaine des études sur le loisir.

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Tony Veal
Leisure, Culture and Lifestyle

Abstract

This paper examines the place of the concept of *lifestyle* in leisure studies in the light of three recent publications. In *Leisure and Contemporary Society* Ken Roberts (1999) concludes that lifestyle is not a key concept for leisure studies because it has not replaced factors such as age, gender and social class in providing individuals with a sense of identity. In *Leisure and Culture,* Chris Rojek (2000) reviews the distinctive features of the dominant theoretical paradigms of leisure studies/leisure sociology over the last thirty years, and suggests that, while cultural studies has had a major influence on leisure studies, in practice it has been preoccupied with class. He therefore suggests that a renewed focus on *culture* could provide a way forward for leisure studies/leisure sociology. Steven Miles (2000), in *Youth Lifestyles in a Changing World*, argues that the concept of *subculture*, traditionally used in studies of youth, has been compromised by its association with the structural, neo-Marxist paradigms of the cultural studies tradition of the 1980s and 1990s, and that therefore the term *lifestyle* is a more suitable concept for studying the lives of young people today. In the light of these and other recent contributions to leisure theory, the paper therefore argues that the concept of lifestyle remains a useful concept which can make a significant contribution to the development of leisure studies.

Tony Veal
Diversión, cultura y estilo de vida

Resumen

En este artículo se estudia el lugar que ocupa el concepto de estilo de vida *(lifestyle)* en el estudio sobre el ocio, a partir de tres obras recientemente publicadas. En *Leisure and Contemporary Society,* Ken Roberts (1999) concluye que el estilo de vida no tiene cabida como concepto clave en los estudios sobre el ocio, porque este concepto no ha remplazado los factores tales que : la edad, el género y la clase social cuando se trata de procurar a los individuos un sentimiento de identidad. En *Leisure and Culture*, Chris Rojek (2000) analiza los rasgos distintivos dominantes del corpus teórico del estudio y la sociología del ocio en el transcurso de los últimos 30 años ; y él es de la opinión que el estudio de las culturas, aunque haya grandemente influenciado los estudios sobre el ocio, en la práctica se ha

preocupado de las clases sociales. Así él opina que una nueva mirada a la *cultura* permitiría al estudio y a la sociología del ocio de dar un paso adelante. Steven Miles (2000), en *Youth Lifestyles in a Changing World*, sugiere que el concepto de *subcultura*, al cual se ha recurrido tradicionalmente en los estudios que tratan sobre la juventud, ha sido comprometido del hecho que se ha asociado al paradigma estructural neo-marxista de la tradición de los estudios sobre la cultura de los años 80 y 90 y que, por consecuencia, es el concepto de estilo de vida (*lifestyle*) que convendría mejor al estudio de la vida de los jóvenes de hoy. A la luz de las recientes publicaciones y de otras contribuciones recientes a la teoría del ocio, sobresale de este artículo que el concepto de *lifestyle* permanece útil y que puede contribuir grandemente a hacer progresar la reflexión en el dominio de los estudios sobre el ocio.