

AN INTRODUCTION TO

LEISURE STUDIES

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

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STAYING IN AND SETTLING DOWN

THIS CHAPTER

- Evaluates the contribution of Robert and Rhona Rapoport's analysis of leisure and the family life cycle
- Discusses the formation of couples in the establishment phase of the life cycle and home-based leisure
- Introduces the concepts of delayed and accelerated transitions into adulthood
- Focuses on the emergence of young adults as leisure consumers, drawing on Tony Blackshaw's arguments about the leisure imagination and on Bauman's view of liquid modernity
- Provides a case study of young adults who develop serious leisure within 'extreme sports' and alternative lifestyles.

This chapter explores two sister concepts – the family life cycle and the life course. The growth of home-based leisure and individualization has been partly captured in social theory by the nuclearization thesis. This mode of social analysis established itself in the 1970s, the decade when the generation of 'baby boomers' were twenty-somethings. According to that thesis, people are choosing more diverse and privatized leisure lifestyles. This chapter develops the arguments of the previous chapter about young people 'growing up' by examining how transitions into adulthood, into occupational careers and into the roles of parents and parenting are becoming less clear and pre-determined. Institutional changes, specifically in patterns of work and education, as well as more complicated family relationships and networks, have resulted in increased ambiguity and ambivalence. The chapter begins to deal with some of the issues that surround postmodern culture and change by looking

at Zygmunt Bauman's conceptualization of liquid modernity. These themes are developed further in Chapter 8 in which middle age and moral panics regarding mid-life crises are discussed.

During the 1970s, in Britain and elsewhere, there emerged a strong policy agenda based on the idea of leisure needs. Staff in the newly established leisure services departments could define their own professional expertise through identifying, researching and satisfying these emergent needs. Just as social policy experts debated how to deliver selective or universal benefits according to factors of income, housing, health and education, leisure services and leisure researchers started to debate the nature of leisure needs in terms of how they could best be satisfied within target populations and realized in local communities.

Stephen Mennell (1979) draws up a threefold distinction between *manifest*, *latent* and *real* needs in the realm of culture, with each order of need generating different research strategies. Manifest needs refer to existing demands for culture in terms of sport, recreation and leisure. These can best be measured by surveys of participation, economic consumption and expenditure. In sharp contrast, latent demands can only be explored through the collection of more qualitative data, in the pursuit of which researchers encourage respondents to discuss new opportunities for leisure, often with the help of cultural support from animators who encourage individuals and target groups to consider new leisure forms and contexts. Such cultural animation asks individuals to take on new challenges and to experiment with leisure forms that were previously ignored or not considered, for whatever social, economic or political reasons. This newly interventionist policy position taxed the professional confidence of leisure specialists and it required a degree of political consensus, both over what might constitute 'leisure needs' and how those needs might be satisfied through public policies. Mennell's final category of 'real needs' also proves to be problematic. There is a marked absence of consensus about the concept of 'real' needs, as differing perspectives in academic disciplines such as psychology, sociology and political sciences argue that because of the machinations of unconscious drives, ideology or mass media propaganda, ordinary people may not be aware of their real needs and consequently may persist in actions and behaviours which are deemed contrary to their own short- or long-term interests. So, in terms of leisure choices, experts in healthy lifestyles can produce substantial clinical evidence that risk taking – for example, smoking, drinking alcohol, consuming illegal drugs, unsafe sex and abnormal eating behaviours – can all run counter to an individual's interests. For some experts, individuals cannot be relied upon to recognize their 'real' needs and, thus, to make the right choices.

LEISURE AND THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

It is precisely this policy context of leisure needs that characterized the research by Robert and Rhona Rapoport (1975). It is usual for academic collaborations to overlap with personal friendships and academic partnerships

but quite rare for authors to be husband and wife. This coincidence may in part explain the authors' central interest in marriage and family life – a topic previously neglected by leisure theorists. The Rapoports focus on the family life cycle and they argue that there are distinct stages within married and family life which are determined by biological and psychological needs. The brevity or longevity of what one might term the 'domestic age' or household arrangements offer an interesting lens through which to view leisure choice. People build lifestyles that offer experiences they value upon the social relationships by which they are surrounded. Families offer diverse resources and 'natural' taken-for-granted relationships for leisure, and key stages in the family life cycle bring different demands and opportunities to grandparents, parents and children alike. For writers such as John Kelly (1983), following Joffre Dumazadier, families offer opportunities for 'semi-leisure', as people are constrained by reciprocal familial obligations (unlike in 'pure leisure' which entails more freedoms), but they do provide 'the immediate community' (Kelly, 1980) for leisure experiences which are valued not so much for the activities that people are engaged in *per se* but rather more for the sociability of others with whom they share leisure.

6.1 Shakespeare's Seven Ages of Man:

All the world's a stage

And all the men and women merely players:

They have their exits and their entrances;

And one man in his time plays many parts,

His acts being seven ages.

At first the infant

Mewing and puking in the nurse's arms

And then the whining school boy

...

Last scene of all

That ends this strange eventful history,

Is second childishness and mere oblivion

Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything

(Continued)

(Continued)

Do you agree with William Shakespeare in his play *As You Like It* that there are seven major life stages?

What do you see as the main stages in people's lives?

When do they usually start and finish?

Are there exceptions?

Will your life course run through the same stages?

J. M. and M. J. Cohen *The Penguin Dictionary of Quotations*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1960, p. 311.

The Rapoport's research involved collecting data from 30 middle-class, dual career families, and they were particularly interested in how people balanced work, family and leisure commitments throughout the family cycle. These three planes of work, family and leisure intersected in ways that changed during the life cycle. From their qualitative interview data, they posited four key distinctive phases or stages within the family life cycle demarcated by marriage, birth and career opportunities. As much feminist research testifies (Deem, 1986; Green et al., 1990; Wearing, 1998), marriage and child care have more significant impacts on women than men. Men carry on their leisure lives, whereas women often struggle to manage domestic work and careers, and once children are born, women almost invariably take responsibility for child care – and accommodate this either by stopping work or by working part-time, as well as taking major responsibility in organizing daily child-minding and baby sitters for 'nights out'. Women also face the responsibility for organizing the care of elderly parents, but that pressure usually appears later in the life course and the implication of this for leisure will be dealt with in Chapter 9.

6.2 Life stages and life interests

Life stage	Preoccupations	Interests
Adolescent (13–19)	Quest for satisfying personality	Experimentation
Young Adults (19–25)	Social identity Attachment to work, sexual relations, marriage	Privatization of interests – Family centred Sexual relations Marriage

Establishment (25–55)	Satisfying life investments	Children leave – wife works
Old age (56–?)	Establish personal integration/work/family less important	Leisure central
<p>What adjustments, if any, would you make to the above typology of the family?</p> <p>Explain the degree to which this model relates to your own experience and that of your friends?</p> <p>What principal changes do you think have taken place in family life since the original research was completed in the 1970s?</p> <p>How might increasing diversity in households and family structures undermine the Rapoport's arguments?</p>		

LEISURE CONSUMERS

One central debate in UK sociology during the 1970s was about the nature and extent of privatization – an increasing preoccupation with the private and the personal – in family life. Many studies documented the changing nature of work family and local communities. It was suggested that the collective organizations of working-class life – extended families, trade unions, working men's clubs and the Labour Party – were in decline. According to some commentators, as we shall explore in the next chapter, social-class membership and ties were weakening and dissolving as individual identities became less likely to be determined solely by class of origin. Individuals were not solely defined by their work or occupation but more by their leisure and lifestyle. The world of class and production seemed less relevant as people had more economic resources and turned their attention towards leisure and consumption. This theme of individualization will be explored in more detail in the next section where we see how social theorists have become more interested in difference and diversity, and also in the final chapter which traces the debates, chiefly in the early 1970s, over the emergence of a leisure society. It will be argued that social identities that are constructed around the importance of sexuality, gender, ethnicity and racial categories have come to dominate mass media attention, marketing and leisure consumption.

In the 1970s the 'privatization thesis' was that young people, particularly in the working classes, were beating a retreat from the public world of traditional networks and instead investing more of themselves in the private worlds of home-building and family life. At that time social theory in the USA and Europe

focused on the 'nuclearization' thesis that suggested that couples with two children (usually captured by the statistical average of 2.2 children per modern family) were much better suited to the spatial and social mobility patterns of modern industrialism. Traditional families, with their extended family obligations and loyalties, tied young people down, closing off opportunities for individual advancement and choice. Young people had to be cosmopolitan, open to an urban and increasingly global pattern of life, rather than endure the village and neighbourhood localism of their parents and relatives.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1968) offered a powerful and compelling analysis of the nuclear family as offering 'a haven in a heartless world'. Here, two strangers with different biographies and separate experiences meet and embark on a long-term relationship, in the process redefining and repositioning themselves as a 'couple'. Thus the nuclear family provided an intimate private space wherein its members could be, and could see themselves as a couple or, in these modern times dominated by business discourses, as 'partners'. Such are the ambivalences and sensitivities about committing to or, more darkly, being trapped in, lifelong relationships that some choose to qualify their relationship commitment with an adjective, such as 'present', 'current' or 'long-term' partner. As one may expect in a 'celebrity culture' (Rojek, 2001) rich individuals insure themselves against things going wrong and seek to avoid financially damaging marriage break-ups by entering into pre-nuptial legal contracts.

In similar vein, Erving Goffman (1971b) developed an insightful analysis of how social relations in public treat heterosexual couples as representing the norm. Singles, never-marrieds and divorcees are (or were, at the time of Goffman's writing) out of place in leisure spaces such as bars, restaurants, cinemas, hotels, and the like. Goffman argues that for women this is a pressing problem and they often seek to give off signs that they are in fact not alone but waiting for someone – so, saving seats, intermittent glancing at watches or the clock, gazing at exits for a purported new arrival should all be read as clues to ward off predatory males who regardless may still seek to engage unattached women in conversation, with the offer of a drink, and maybe more.

Setting up nuclear families is a risky business as a great deal is invested in the idea of romantic love, marriage and happy families. The ideology of love and intimate family relationships is amplified at Christmas time, although the reality of travelling home, present giving, meeting up and spending the holiday with family and Christmas dinner itself are all very likely simply hard work for the majority. Getting Christmas over or getting over Christmas is a pressing existential problem. Despite the chasm between ideology and reality, sharing domestic work, coping with career ups and downs, buying property, choosing furnishings and going on holidays may be opportunities to consolidate this social construction of reality. But all these realities, including leisure lives, have to be negotiated, lived and managed. Clearly having and rearing children helps to consolidate this long-term project and provides the major momentum and focus for the two adults who are now young (and not so young) mums and dads.

In the UK and elsewhere, the emphasis on couples and nest building was in the 1960s in no small part fuelled by the growing availability of disposable

income to be spent on home ownership and the purchase of domestic goods. It was also driven by a manufacturing and service sector keen to develop niche markets in lifestyle consumption. After the austerity of the post-war years and relentless rationing, vividly described by the social historian David Kynaston (2007, 2009) the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a sustained growth in home ownership and leisure-related spending. This was accompanied by the idea of affluent workers (Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1969) and changing gender roles (Young and Willmott, 1973), as it was suggested that men were becoming more home-centred in their thinking and likely to be spending more time there, becoming more involved with domestic work, DIY and child care. The slogan of 'we're all middle class now' implied not only that class divisions had melted away but that everyone now aspired to middle-class tastes in home and car ownership, leisure lifestyles and mass media consumption.

Car ownership and travel became *sine qua non*s of this newly emerging affluence and, for most, they were ingredients essential to the new leisure lifestyles which included excursions and holidays, both at home and abroad. Indeed, for some historians of leisure, the post-war period signified the weakening of local community ties and the emergence of a new generation enjoying higher rates of geographical mobility and wider horizons than previous generations. This 'hyper-mobility' as writers such as John Adams (1999) termed it, was experienced mostly by young adults and it was typified by the explosion of cheap 'low cost' airlines such as easyJet, Flybe, Jet2 and Ryanair. These airlines all flew, for example, to Spain and Greece, to tourist destinations which rebranded themselves as key venues and niche markets for 'club culture', 'raves' and holiday excess. Indeed, this holiday atmosphere was recreated in student cities in the 1990s with the emergence of vibrant student music scenes, often flourishing in unlikely old industrial northern cities such as Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle and Sheffield.

Day excursions, mini-breaks, holidays abroad, eating out and dining at home were now the province, and to the taste of, the vast majority of the population, see Roberts (2004). The closely-knit working-class community portrayed by Richard Hoggart (1957), Alan Sillitoe (1960), Young and Willmott (1957), and many others in the 1950s and 60s, had been dissipated by new housing patterns in cities, by mass production and generally by the mass consumption of media culture – TV, cinema, records, and so on. The 1960s 'countercultural' revolution in both USA and Europe challenged and transgressed the boundaries of class, gender and race. However, despite the claims for political and personal change, many social researchers found resilient continuities in class, notably in restricted social mobility and hierarchical personal relations. Feminists challenged the idea of 'new men' and doubted that a more egalitarian sexual division of labour was now being observed. The 'affluent worker' research, led by John Goldthorpe and David Lockwood (1969), has been reassessed by many writers interested in social class and industrial sociology (Eldridge, 1980). Marketers and advertisers sought to develop brand loyalty with concomitant interest in buying 'white goods' such as washing machines, fridges and freezers as well as black goods such as radios, television sets, record players and tape recorders. In the 1970s this area

of consumption seemed to point up a traditional sexual division of labour about such purchasing decisions, with women taking on the choice of white goods while men concentrated their attentions and conversations around the more expensive hi-tech and prestigious black goods.

6.3 Consuming gender and leisure goods

Think about the following list of consumer and leisure goods and services.

- Alcoholic drinks
- Bicycles
- Body tattoos
- Cars
- Children's clothes
- Cinema and film DVDs
- Earrings
- Fitness classes
- Jeans
- Laptops
- Leisure centres
- Mobile phones
- Motorbikes
- Newspapers and magazines
- Shoes and trainers
- Sports broadcasting
- X-box games

In what ways do business providers seek to differentiate between men and women in the marketing of these?

Are any of the commodities or services 'gender free'?

How important, for instance, is colour in differentiating between 'male' and 'female' leisure goods?

What are the traditional boundaries between male and female leisure?

How have these boundaries changed over the past 30 years?

Does it make any difference if the leisure experience is located in voluntary, commercial or public sector organizations?

DELAYED AND ACCELERATED TRANSITIONS

As we have argued in the previous chapter on youth, each generation seeks to establish its own distinctive identity or at least to win some distinctive space from the parent generation and from that generation's cultural issues and historic concerns. The emergence of privatization and the weakening of local community ties were in part imposed by changing work patterns during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This occurred primarily because of shifts in the international division of labour from West to East and also in response to the impact of global patterns of migration on the UK. With declining primary industries and the relocation of manufacturing industry to the developing 'tiger' economies in Asia, many regions in the UK, particularly the Midlands and in the North, suffered exceptionally high rates of unemployment. The restructuring of the UK economy, with its growing dependence on financial and other service sectors in the South East, resulted in high local rates of youth unemployment. Some academics and policy makers designated these drastic changes in patterns of employment as playing a significant role in causing the 'youth crisis'. For Paul Willis (1988), the young unemployed were suddenly trapped in 'frozen transitions' because of the functional and systemic breakdown of three major building blocks of industrial capitalism. These three blocks, forged in the nineteenth century and fine-tuned in the twentieth century, were the nuclear family, primary and secondary education and paid work. The three institutions functioned as an industrialized escalator from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood. With no paid employment and no work, the youth cohort was going nowhere and enjoyed few resources to break into affluent consumer culture and leisure consumption. This cohort, then, entered into a period of enforced leisure, but with few leisure opportunities. Previous generations had waited or had been made to wait patiently for adulthood. The counter-cultural youth of the 1960s had wanted the future and they had wanted it 'now'. The youth of the 1980s felt that they were being denied even the present.

Another, newer and more disruptive force for change during this historical period was state-sponsored immigration. This saw the growth of what Sivanandan (1990) has called a 'reserve army of labour', composed of migrant workers who were encouraged by the British government to come to Britain in times of growth in the UK economy yet were usually among the first to experience unemployment and exclusion in times of recession. In large urban conurbations, first traditional white working-class communities, and later middle-class communities, were transformed by new patterns of migration as Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi male workers and later their families established themselves in London, the East Midlands and West Yorkshire. Substantial research about 'race relations' was completed during this period (Banton, 1967; Miles and Phizacklea, 1979; Rex, 1970, 1973; CCCS, 1982), and policies to combat institutional racism in education and work, community hostility in leisure spaces, housing discrimination and personal prejudice were enacted.

Significantly, these new Commonwealth migrants also introduced cultural difference and diversity, particularly in family relationships and structures. As we have seen in the previous chapter, one response to this emerging difference and diversity was a moral panic, often about 'law and order', orchestrated by the mass media and with a distinctive focus on the differing lifestyles of 'black' single parents or tightly knit extended 'Asian' families. The paradox for welfare policy and social work institutions was one of managing inequality and difference. Through the lumping together of 'black' and 'Asian' families for policy convenience, the issue became framed as a straight choice between integration and separation. The matter was thus rendered in stark and increasingly racist terms: should these 'foreigners' be integrated into mainstream 'white' culture or should they retain their distinctive 'black' religious and cultural practices. One solution demanded equal opportunities to encourage and enable migrants to assimilate; the other championed anti-racist policies and policing to make mainstream power structures accept diversity and difference.

During periods of change, schooling and education were designated as crucial mechanisms for managing transitions into work and developing the necessary skills to become competent adults. Indeed, as we shall see in the final chapter on leisure futures, one major new challenge for academics was to provide a curriculum appropriate and relevant to 'the leisure society'. In the UK, the 1970s cohort of young people experienced the consolidation of a comprehensive school system and an increase in educational opportunities for young men and women. The raising of the school leaving age in the UK from 15 to 16 in 1972 and the substantial growth in higher education resulted in a much large proportion of young adults going off to university, supported by state educational grants. In the UK, unlike most other EU states where young people gravitated towards local universities, more and more young people spent at least three years away from home. The conventional transition into adulthood, traditionally secured by full-time work, was therefore delayed for many and meant that young adults had more time and space to establish their own personal identities and future career directions. For many too, the shift into Rapoport's second stage of 'young adults' was delayed and this permitted individuals scope to explore and experiment with their identities, sexuality and lifestyles. The very idea of settling down was questioned by the mass media, particularly those agencies committed to what writers term the 'counter culture', and individuals were exhorted to 'do your own thing', a slogan later condensed by the transnational sport goods corporation Nike to 'just do it'.

It seems clear that during the 1980s and 1990s one institutional response to the problem of Willis' 'frozen transitions' was to postpone adulthood for many young people by extending the time they spent in education. Politicians, policy makers and educationalists welcomed the development of new universities and colleges. City planners in university towns developed university sites, student halls of residence and designated student quarters where recreational drug and alcohol use (and abuse) were deemed a normal weekend diet for those involved in student lifestyles. Indeed, student lifestyles around city-centre pubs and a

vibrant club culture scene were often the centre piece of re-imaging postmodern cities in the UK (see Bramham and Spink, 2009; Spink and Bramham, 1999, 2000).

With this expansion in the number of higher education places in the 1980s and 90s, particularly in the 'new' universities (generally the former British polytechnics, made into universities in 1992), there was a body of right-wing opinion that suggested that the bulk of students were simply playing at university for three years or hardly working for a degree. A clear dividing line was drawn, or was perceived to exist, between elite universities that offered real university education and degrees (such as London, Oxbridge and the 'Russell' group), whereas the emerging 'virtual' universities in new places such as Brighton, Derby, Coventry and Southampton offered, in the then contemporary press parlance 'Mickey Mouse' degrees, featuring subjects such as the widely decried 'Media Studies'. However, the old polytechnics in traditional university cities towns such as London, Oxford, Liverpool, Nottingham, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield, renamed themselves often as city or metropolitan universities and quickly mirrored traditional universities by appointing Professors, building research expertise and developing postgraduate courses, with governing bodies appointing new Vice Chancellors on salaries and with remuneration packages often well in excess of their more traditional university counterparts.

For critics, those students embarking on new multidisciplinary degrees and courses were simply gaining 'useless knowledge' with no clear vocational destination, despite the latter never being the hallmark of traditional university education (students studying Classics at Oxford or Cambridge are seldom rebuked for doing degrees that have no job relevance): these young people were simply being provided with three years' purposeless leisure at the state's expense. Philosophers such as Roger Scruton dismissed as useless degrees in such fields as sport, media or football studies. Such courses, he argued, were simply warehousing young people. The time spent at university was said by right-wing spokespeople to be a waste of time and public money. The 'New' Labour government's commitment, made by Prime Minister Tony Blair at the Labour Party conference of 1999, to have at least half of the teenage population in higher education by 2010 was seen as a misguided attempt at large-scale social engineering and a convenient means of concealing large-scale youth unemployment. It is worth mentioning that Roger Scruton's opinions stand in sharp contrast with other philosophers. For instance, Bertrand Russell celebrated the importance of what he described as 'useless knowledge', that is knowledge achieved by the sheer love of learning rather than applied knowledge used as a means to an end. This argument was developed by Bertrand Russell in 1932 and has since been reprinted in the Routledge Classics series with the title, *In Praise of Idleness* (2002). The second chapter in that collection of essays is called 'Useless' Knowledge. Russell questions passionately, and with eloquence, the value contemporary society has placed on a utilitarian theory of knowledge, that is, on the need to know things in order that we may

achieve some practical outcome or purpose. He maps out the potency of natural sciences in gaining knowledge in order to predict and to control nature and so generate new technologies in medicine, engineering and industry but, paradoxically, such technologies also generate negative consequences and unpredictable outcomes. Indeed, in this regard, Russell pre-empts some of Ulrich Beck's arguments about the risk society by over half a century. By the 1990s Anthony Giddens (1999) and Ulrich Beck (1992) were emphasizing that science and technology had generated unforeseen damage to the natural environment and nobody in government or elsewhere appeared to be in control: people were living in a 'runaway world'.

Two generations earlier Bertrand Russell had sought to defend the notion of learning at leisure. He stressed too that historically the English education system has valued a traditional and, ultimately, 'useless' curriculum, cherished in grammar schools and old universities; such institutions value the sheer *joie de vivre* in learning and in a 'classical' education. Abstract knowledge is simply an end in itself. Russell argued that such 'useless' knowledge leads to human self-awareness, a transcendence of self-interest, of power and all things practical. He argued, perhaps more controversially, that totalitarian impulses have been fuelled by ill-educated drives to control, bully and dominate, whereas we should pursue knowledge to celebrate both culture and leisure.

So, for some philosophers and sociologists, leisure is grounded in culture and self-expression and self-exploration. However, not all have shared in these new found freedoms of education. The constraints of class, race and gender have meant that comparatively few have experienced substantial social mobility and, perversely, social and political events of the 1980s and 90s meant that many experienced frozen transitions because unemployment or underemployment simply tied poor people to their existing social positions and lengthened their years of dependency and debt. Some young women too became parents at the adolescent stage and there were media panics about teenage pregnancies and single parenting. Some unhappy teenagers may have used pregnancy to escape the constraints of their own family of origin and from the point of view of the mainstream media, this accelerated transition was another luxury funded by state welfare and housing benefits and there was growing moral panic about single parenting. This was followed up by a demand that absent fathers contribute financially (and perhaps emotionally) to the support and maintenance of their offspring. This led to the passing of the Child Support Act of 1991 and the setting up of the Child Support Agency to administer it two years later.

HYPERMOBILITY AND RESTLESSNESS

Zygmunt Bauman is not insensitive to such massive inequalities of experience as characterize modern life. In a prodigious series of books, articles and, just as importantly, interviews (1992, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007) he has outlined what he sees as the emergence of a new kind of society or, more accurately, a

new sociality of individuals. In solid modernity, according to Bauman, an individual's identity is *fixed* by family and reinforced by growing up and working in the networks of face-to-face relationships that characterized local neighbourhoods. The individual was firmly grounded in these local communities, and bound, furthermore, into the cohesive institutional structures represented by the agencies of the local and national state. Identity in solid modernity is fixed and, to illustrate this, Bauman deploys the metaphor of the traditional Victorian family photograph, often taken by a professional photographer. This photograph worked to freeze any significant event such as a christening, wedding or graduation; it was then framed and displayed prominently on the mantelpiece, the hall walls or in the family photograph album.

6.4 Photographing people and places

Drawing on Susan Sontag's work, Jenny Hockey and Allison James (2003: 7) argue that even the family photograph betrays not only the decline in the importance of family networks but also the process of ageing.

'To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt' ([Sontag] 1978: 15). In its overarching claim to be a representation of the real, the photograph fixes us, so providing us with a sense of continuity. Simultaneously, however, its claim to realism helps to remind us of time's passage and the instability of the moment captured by the lens.

What are Hockey and James saying here?

Would you agree with such an analysis of family photographs and the nature of photography?

How does this measure up to John Urry's (1990) analysis of the 'tourist gaze'? In the book of that title he argues that holiday makers and tourists gaze upon iconic places, buildings, landscapes (etc.) often including family and friends and so collect authentic records of people and places visited.

Think of the variety of reasons why you (and your family members) take photographs.

How do you feel about the photos taken when you were a baby, and at primary and secondary school?

However, in what Bauman in his earlier work cast as postmodernity (but has more recently defined as liquid modernity), the individual's identity is far more open and flexible. He and other contemporary sociologists question the very concept of the life cycle with its fixed divisions and predictable cyclical phases

or stages, preferring the more unrestricted concept of 'life course', where career pathways and family relations and friendships are negotiated, managed and, to a degree, open-ended. Young adults avoid long-term commitments to others; relationships are contingent, ambivalent and sustained 'until further notice'. To capture this difference and fragility, Bauman persists with the photographic metaphor. For him the postmodern identity in the 1990s and onwards is captured by video camera and videotapes: it is erasable. The problem for people in solid modernity was often how to escape a fixed identity designated by class, or gender or race, whereas in liquid modernity with its emphasis on flexibility and the gaining of new skills, the challenge is to stabilize identity, to secure some kind of permanence in a somewhat chaotic, risky and unpredictable existence. In later works Bauman drives that metaphor further as most photos, certainly by young people, are now taken on mobile phones. The mobile is the icon of postmodern times or liquid modernity; it captures the individual's own identity, a repository of contacts – friends to text and family members to call on – as well as providing global access to Internet forums and chat groups, Twitter, Facebook and so on ... all immediately accessible but always at a distance. Paradoxically, this digitalized technology overcomes what Giddens terms 'time space distanciation' but yet the individual remains alone and isolated.

RESTLESSNESS AND TRAVELLING LIGHT

Over the last few decades, social theorists have become concerned with the specific and burgeoning area of leisure activity that is travel and tourism. As we have seen, postmodern life and times have been characterized by restlessness, by the individual's desire to visit new, often exotic places and to take in new sights and experiences. Zygmunt Bauman draws a clear distinction between the journeying, expeditions and tours of the past and the holidaying, travel and tourism of contemporary times.

It is via the use of metaphor that Bauman (1996) contrasts personal identity, past and present. If the modern 'problem of identity' was about how to construct and stabilize identity, the postmodern (or 'liquidly modern') problem is to avoid fixation, remain flexible and 'to keep options open'. In solid modernity, Bauman sees people as pilgrims through time, struggling with eternal persistence of the soul: people search for a trail through the desert which is both placeless and boundless. Life becomes a pilgrimage – a search for the truth, a distinctive time and place away from home where one can discover oneself and God's presence. Hence the religious quest for salvation and spiritual fulfilment: the Protestant work ethic created an inner desert of delayed gratification. Within this form and other versions of religious belief, one's existential quest is to know that one is on the way to heaven to join God's elected few and avoid damnation in hell.

For the wealthy UK aristocracy in the nineteenth century this journey would be recast as the 'The Grand Tour of Europe' wherein young men, but sometimes also young women, often accompanied by their mentors and would-be

chaperones, could sample the comforts and freedoms of hotel life, while visiting important tourist destinations in France, Italy and Switzerland, and so gain experience of the 'other' or 'the foreign' in terms of classical antiquity and the Renaissance in art, food, culture and landscape. Hence, the pilgrim is the metaphor for identity building in modernity. By contrast, the stroller, the tourist and the vagabond jointly offer the postmodern metaphor of resisting the horror of being fixed. All these roles in liquid modernity are at leisure or at the very least not tied directly to paid employment and work disciplines.

For Bauman, the pilgrim's successor is Baudelaire's 'stroller' or Benjamin's 'stranger' – these are people *in* but not *of* the crowd; similarly tourism is a marginal activity. The tourist searches everywhere he goes *in* but his home is elsewhere. So, as one 'strolls' whether in city-centre arcades, out-of-town shopping malls, countryside parks or seaside promenades, the individual only fleetingly captures experiences, glancing at sights – perhaps important historical sites. One is blasé and distractedly pays attention to people and places, but, more importantly, one is perhaps noticed, one is on display, viewed by others but one is essentially self-contained and alone, just going about or at least minding one's own business. Through postmodern eyes all is ephemeral, transient and transitory. So in leisure one can explore and experiment with identities just as one can surf the Internet, visiting many websites and choosing to register, log in and become a member and so construct different identities or avatars. The dark side of this urban anonymity, this world of urban strangers, is an unexpected encounter with the 'urban other' (Taylor et al., 1996) or in Bauman's terms the vagabond – in the past master-less individuals who roamed from local parish to parish and whom poor law officers were keen to 'move on' lest they sought relief and became a burden on the rates. So, for Bauman, vagabonds are marginal people and are, in a sense, homeless. Poor people live on the margins of capitalist society and consumer culture. Liquid modernity thrives on simulation, ambiguity, deception and ambivalence. One would expect that these processes are even more powerful in virtual reality rather in the material world. On websites on the Internet, identities are not always what they appear or purport to be. There is always the danger of misrepresentation as some adults may choose to 'groom' children for their own dark pleasure. There is also the fear of the unknown as Internet bloggers or 'trolls' threaten rape, violence and murder against other Facebook or Twitter users.

6.5 Pilgrims, strollers and vagabonds

How useful are Bauman's ideal types of the *pilgrim*, the *stroller*, the *vagabond* and the *tourist* in understanding the following leisure experiences:

- Young people, usually students taking a 'gap year' before or after college or university – does it make a difference if this involves periods

(Continued)

(Continued)

of paid work, voluntary charity work, visiting far-flung relatives or attending important mega-events, for example rock concerts, music festivals, sporting competitions (e.g. Rugby and Football World Cups, Tour de France, the Olympics, etc.)

- A newly married couple on honeymoon
- Taking a holiday on a cruise ship
- Tackling an endurance event/challenge overseas single-handedly, for example a marathon/Audax cycle event, long-distance walk, rock climbing or a triathlon
- Shopping for new clothes – for oneself or a present for others, for example birthdays, Christmas, christenings, etc.
- A self-catering week in a holiday cottage
- A skiing holiday with ‘mates’
- A city mini-break
- A summer month in one’s own holiday home
- A celebrity millionaire spending a week under cover for a TV documentary

EXTREME LEISURE AND LEISURE LIFESTYLES

The recurring message of Chris Rojek’s book, *Decentring Leisure* (1995), is one of the profound social change that accompanied the transition from industrial capitalism to post-industrialism. In this particular book his preferred terms to denote this seismic economic and cultural shift are Modernity 1 and Modernity 2. Whereas Modernity 1 is about rational productive work, state bureaucracy and ordered leisure, Modernity 2 is about the phenomenology (subjectivity) of individual experience and the individual’s restless quest for pleasure and self-identity. In *Leisure and Culture* Rojek (2000) suggests a shift from ritual to performative culture. Societies must organize time and space for social and economic survival yet they have surplus energy and unused resources. At the heart of Modernity 1 are poverty, inequality and scarcity and the individual’s role as a disciplined worker, *homo faber*, whereas abundance, conspicuous consumption and transgression lie at the heart of Modernity 2 wherein the individual is recast as a creative and playful *homo ludens*. In the final chapter, Rojek raises the question of whether leisure is an individual or a societal need. The productivist view is that, as *homo faber*, an individual should have the right to work. Alternatively, the postmodern thrust of the *homo ludens* emphasizes the importance of exploring play, learning

and culture in the leisure society. Another recurring theme in Rojek's book stresses the processes of de-differentiation. De-differentiation features as a central concept in postmodern thinking which suggests that rigid traditional cultural boundaries are fragmenting and haemorrhaging: for example, the divisions that separate high and popular culture, and also those between work and leisure. Traditional elite forms of opera or art may become popularized, just as old industrial buildings can become tourist and leisure spaces and work offices become more relaxed, pleasant and computerized. With digitalization and computerization, people can work hard at 'working out' in their leisure time and also 'chill out' and relax during more flexible work hours. Few professional workers in service sector jobs have to face up to the discipline of clocking on and clocking off. This relaxation of work discipline has a downside, as such workers are expected to be flexible, to attend breakfast meetings and to work long hours at night or over weekends in order to meet organizational and project deadlines.

The de-differentiation of the boundaries between work and leisure gain significance in research into young adults with a taste for extreme sports or what Belinda Wheaton (2004) terms 'lifestyle sports'. Such activities celebrate the postmodern condition in that they tend to be individual pursuits, often demanding hi-tech equipment, stylized commodities, enhanced physical fitness and performance skills, risk taking and, most importantly, they are defined as central to the individual's self-identity. So, in answer to the Goffmanesque existential question, 'Well, who am I really?' the reply to one's self and others is immediately, 'I'm a rock climber, athlete, sky diver, snowboarder, mountain biker, surfer or fell runner'. In Modernity 2 work and occupation no longer determine or signify one's personal identity but rather what the individual chooses in leisure time. These activities constitute 'serious leisure' and the bedrock of personal identity, as is the case, for example, with women rock climbers where women can really be themselves when they are rock climbing (see Dillely and Scraton, 2010). Indeed, Wheaton suggests that lifestyle sports draw upon subaltern or subordinate subcultures and have the potential to challenge cultural traditions, particularly a gender order characterized by hegemonic masculinities.

Given the postmodern taste for restlessness and transgression, Rob Shields (1992) argues that these sports are liminal, denouncing or resisting institutionalization, regulations and commercialization. However, in late capitalism, these processes are hard to resist as niche market entrepreneurial firms seek to commodify sporting forms and equipment with brand names and distinctive exclusive products: surfing and skateboarding would be good examples here. Bespoke commercial websites, often celebrity endorsed, as well as social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter, feed off and develop interest in lifestyle sports. As yet few detailed empirical content analyses have been completed on this plethora of webs (what some cultural researchers now refer to as 'netnography'), but one only needs to look at Sheldon Brown's (2001) website or search the Internet for 'cycling' to gain an insight into the diversity

and intensity of these subcultural sites (see <http://www.sheldonbrown.com/home.html>). Nevertheless, work and paid employment are often chosen to facilitate the leisure interest in extreme challenges such as mountain biking, rock climbing, surfing, paragliding, and so forth. Extreme sports often operate with strong subcultures which celebrate the playfulness, enjoyment and ecstasy of peak experiences (which are denied or crushed by routine everyday life). The postmodern condition of restlessness, the search for excitement, stimulation and challenge are central to these pursuits.

6.6 Extreme sports

Belinda Wheaton has written extensively on these extreme or lifestyle sports. She argues that they exhibit the following characteristics.

Extreme sports:

- are recent
- emphasize 'grassroots' participation
- involve the consumption of new objects and technologies (e.g. longboards in surfing)
- demand commitment in time, money and lifestyle and in terms of collective expression
- generate a participatory ideology that promotes fun, hedonism and self-actualization
- are practised predominantly by white middle-class Western 'youth'
- are usually individualistic in form and attitude
- are non-aggressive yet involve risk and danger
- take place in outdoor spaces and are 'liminal' without fixed spaces or boundaries. In the 1980s, these activities were also termed 'whizz sports' or Xgames. Participants such as skateboarders challenged urban planners and the preconceived functionality of architectural design in car parks, pedestrian shopping centres, and squares. Equally, BASE jumpers choose antennas, skyscrapers, bridges and cliffs for free-fall parachute jumping.

What experiences have you of any of the extreme sports mentioned above?

What arguments can you offer to support Lincoln Allison's (2001) claim that lifestyle sports are postmodern revivals of 'amateurism' in sport?

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored current debates in social theory about the nature of the family life cycle, leisure and the life course. It has been suggested that the

growth of home-based leisure and individualization has been partly captured in social theory by the nuclearization thesis and more recently by the emergence of a fragmented postmodern cultural condition. In addition, this chapter has developed the arguments of the previous chapter about young people 'growing up' by examining how transitions into adulthood, into work and into the roles of parents and parenting have become less clear and pre-determined. Institutional changes, specifically in patterns of work and education, as well as more complicated family relationships and networks, have resulted in increased ambiguity and ambivalence. The chapter has begun to deal with some of the issues that surround postmodern culture and change by touching on Zygmunt Bauman's conceptualization of liquid modernity. These ideas are developed further in the Chapter 8 which discusses middle age and moral panics about mid-life crises.