

1. Leisure Participation and Time-Use Surveys: an Overview

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Published as: G. Cushman, A. J. Veal & J. Zuzanek (2005) Leisure participation and time-use surveys: an overview. In G. Cushman, A. J. Veal & J. Zuzanek (Eds) *Free Time and Leisure Participation: International Perspectives* (pp. 1-16). Wallingford, UK: CABI Publishing.

Introduction - why leisure participation data?

What are the trends in the use of the Internet for leisure purposes around the world? Is leisure time increasing or decreasing? Is active participation in sport increasing or decreasing in developed, newly industrialised and developing countries? Which social groups patronise the arts, visit national parks or play sport and which groups do not? Despite the increasing global significance of sport, entertainment, culture and the conservation and use of the environment, it is still not possible to provide definitive answers to simple questions like these on worldwide patterns of leisure participation. Data are collected on an internationally comparable basis on a wide range of phenomena, such as health, housing, education and economic activity¹, but little if any comparable data exist for leisure activity. It might be thought that leisure is not sufficiently important to justify the cost of gathering such information but at national level its importance is widely recognised, so that, over the years, governmental bodies, academics and commercial organisations in many countries have compiled national and data on patterns of leisure participation and expenditure. In addition to its social and cultural significance, leisure, in its many forms, is a substantial sector of government and it is a growing market phenomenon, providing jobs, incomes and economic development. In aggregate, it could therefore be said to be an increasingly significant phenomenon internationally.

Further, leisure is one of the basic human rights safeguarded by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as the following articles indicate:

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay. (Article 24)

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. (Article 27)²

In 1987, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations declared:

One of the primary needs of the human person is leisure and such use of it as will provide psychological strength and refreshment. (Perez de Cuellar, 1987)

In Europe, the idea of leisure as a right has been embraced in relation to one aspect of leisure, namely sport, in the Council of Europe, in its 1978 *Sport for All Charter*, which stated:

Every individual shall have the right to participate in sport. (Council of Europe, 1978)

Thus leisure has been recognised by national governments and international organisations as being of sufficient importance to be accorded the status of a human right and a human need. In the same way that other aspects of human rights and social and economic welfare are monitored internationally, there is therefore a case for leisure to be similarly monitored. Social and economic rights, however, generally attract less governmental attention than civil and political rights; indeed, referring to the Universal Declaration's articles on economic and social rights, David Harvey has said:

What is striking about these articles ... is the degree to which hardly any attention has been paid over the last fifty years to their implementation or application and how almost all countries that were signatories to the Universal Declaration are in gross violation of these articles. Strict enforcement of such rights would entail massive and in some senses revolutionary transformations in the political-economy of capitalism. (Harvey, 2000: 89-90)

Whether or not the idea of rights is invoked, governments at national, regional and local levels throughout the world, are heavily involved in supporting and promoting such sectors of leisure as: sport; physical recreation and education; outdoor recreation in urban and natural areas; children's play; the arts; natural and cultural heritage; and broadcasting. This involvement is justified on the grounds that such leisure activities make significant contributions to the quality of life of individuals and communities (Marans and Mohai, 1991) and overlap with other important governmental responsibilities, such as conservation, education, enhancement of national unity and identity and economic development. There are also aspects of leisure that can be harmful, such as abuse of legal and illegal drugs, problem gambling, sporting accidents and activities that cause environmental or cultural degradation. Here governments become involved in regulation, education and sometimes prohibition. Whether promoting, providing for, regulating or combating forms of leisure activity, governments and the communities they serve need statistical data to indicate the scale of need and demand and to monitor the effects of government policy and activity.

But leisure is not only a public sector phenomenon: consumer expenditure on leisure in developed economies is estimated to be as high as 25% of all consumer expenditure (eg. Martin and Mason, 1998; Veal and Lynch, 2001: 136-9). Leisure industries are a significant aspect of the process of globalization, particularly in the area of international film, music, television, electronic and sport entertainment. It is also an intrinsic part of local economies, in the form of restaurants, bars, hotels and clubs, retail outlets and live arts, sport and entertainment venues. While most of the surveys reported on in this book are publicly available and government-funded, used primarily by public bodies for policy and planning purposes, they are also of interest to the private sector. A number of surveys which collect data on consumer expenditure on leisure, as well as participation, are conducted in various countries around the world to serve the needs of the commercial sector, but are generally only available on a subscriber basis (eg. Mintel the UK (see Mintel, nd) and Simmons in the USA (see Kelly and Warnick, 1999)).

This book and its predecessor were designed to draw together existing information on patterns of leisure participation from a number of countries. The existence of these surveys, often conducted at considerable expense, is an indication of a growing worldwide recognition of the importance of leisure to communities, nations, economies and environments. The data from the various countries represented were collected at different

times, using widely differing methodologies, so possibilities for comparison between countries are very limited. It is to be hoped that the act of publishing this book and demonstrating the problems of comparison, will stimulate consideration of ways in which future surveys might be designed with international comparison in mind.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter we consider first the role of national leisure participation surveys in leisure studies and then review a number of predecessor publications which have sought to present international comparative research on leisure and aspects of leisure. This is followed by a discussion of the problems of conducting international, or cross-national, comparative research in general.

Leisure surveys at national level

Data are regularly collected by most governments for a limited number of aspects of leisure, as a by-product of taxation, licensing and other forms of regulation. Thus, for example, in countries where the activities are legal, data are generally available on expenditure on gambling and on expenditure on and consumption of alcohol and tobacco. Data are also assembled by most countries on international travel as a result of border controls. Data on working hours – in part the converse of leisure time – are gathered as a by-product of industrial and economic policy. Data on mass media use are generally gathered for commercial reasons and sometimes for licensing purposes. For more comprehensive, and in-depth, information on leisure participation, however, it is necessary to conduct special social surveys of the population. Such surveys can take two forms: *activity-based* or *time-based*.

Activity-based leisure participation surveys use questionnaires to gather information on people's recalled participation in leisure activities over a specified period of time (the 'reference period'), such as a month or a year.

Time-based surveys, sometimes called 'time-budget' or 'diary' studies, require respondents to keep *diaries* of all their activities over a specified period of time, usually one or two days. Start and finish times of activities are recorded in the diaries, including simultaneous activities (for example, listening to the radio while eating) and sometimes the location and company involved. In these surveys leisure time is just one element of the data collected.

Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, and sometimes other lifestyle or attitude data, are also gathered in both types of survey.

As far as its leisure content is concerned, the time-use survey can be seen as a participation survey with a short reference period. For studying leisure as a whole, broad categories of leisure, or a few individual activities which most people do on most days, such as watching television or listening to the radio, the short reference period of the time-use survey presents few difficulties. But if the researcher is interested in individual activities, a time-use survey will often include only a very small sample of participants, making detailed analysis difficult, if not impossible. For example, one time-use survey indicates that, on a typical day, an average of 5 minutes is spent visiting 'entertainment and cultural venues' (see Table 2.9). However, this involves only 4.3% of the population (ABS, 1998: 22). With a total sample of, say, 10,000 this means that 430 are cultural participants. This is a small sub-sample upon which to base the analysis of individual cultural activities, some of which might involve as few as perhaps 2% of all cultural participants – that is, a sub-sample of just

8 or 9 in the example. By contrast, a reference period of a month or a year produces much larger sub-samples of cultural participants – perhaps 50% or 60% of the sample – providing large enough sub-samples to facilitate detailed analysis, such as examination of the age, class or gender composition of participants in individual activities. Therefore, while time-use studies are invaluable for examination of broad patterns of leisure time availability and relationships between leisure and paid and unpaid work and other activities, leisure researchers and policy-makers also use participation surveys with longer reference periods for detailed analysis. Hence the chapters in this book generally present data from both types of survey.

While a few leisure participation and time-use surveys are known to have been carried out in the first half of the twentieth century, the modern era of survey-based leisure research began in the 1960s, particularly with the work of the United States Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC, 1962), which utilised, among other techniques, large-scale national participation surveys to establish base data on levels of participation. Other Western countries rapidly followed suit with their own surveys. The impetus for conducting studies of leisure activity at this time was the challenge presented to planners in most Western countries by the combination of growing affluence, significant increases in car ownership and consequent growth in car-based recreation, and the rapid growth of the population, particularly of the then young 'baby boomer' population. At that time large-scale, national or regional, time-use and questionnaire-based community leisure participation surveys vied with on-site surveys of users of individual recreation facilities or networks of facilities (usually outdoor recreation areas) as the main vehicle for empirical data collection on leisure.

Time use surveys also have a history stretching back into the first half of the twentieth century, but were recognised as an element of leisure studies with the advent, in the 1960s, of the *Multinational Comparative Time-Budget Research Project*, which is described below under international data collection. Many individual countries have conducted time-budget surveys in the intervening 35 years, partly as a contribution to leisure policy, but also in regard to other policy concerns, such as gender equity in paid and unpaid work time.

The initiative and resources for the participation and time-use surveys have come largely from governments and government agencies, driven by policy concerns, while academics and consultants have been involved as advisers and as primary and secondary analysts. Early surveys were generally purely descriptive. Governments of the day, concerned about outdoor recreation, sport and physical recreation or patronage of the arts, needed data in order to formulate, refine or monitor policies; the surveys provided an initial 'position statement' - for example on the proportion of the population engaging in sporting or cultural activities and the variation in participation levels among various social groups. But in some cases, studies were also predictive. In situations of rapid economic and demographic growth, the data provided the basis for demand forecasting so that governments could be assisted in planning for the future.

The early surveys can therefore be seen as part of a general concern for social policy issues which was a feature of interventionist Western governments of the 1960s. In the former eastern European communist bloc they reflected government aims to establish 'socialist lifestyles' and to research ways and means of achieving this (Filipcova, 1972). While governments have generally become less interventionist over the intervening 30 years, many

of the institutions established in the 1960s to administer government policies on various aspects of leisure, have continued to generate a demand for data on leisure participation and time use.

In the area of social behaviour the 'facts' are continually changing, in contrast to the situation in most of the physical sciences where a discovery, once made, is forever true (even though its theoretical explanation may change). In the social sciences a discovery may be true only for the instant in which it is made; from that time on its value as a description of contemporary society begins to 'decay'. It therefore becomes necessary to update such data continually. This is certainly true of data on patterns of leisure behaviour and time use. Indeed, it is the actual and potential *fluidity* of leisure behaviour that often gives rise to the need for data collection in the first place. Changes in patterns of leisure participation arise from cultural, social, economic and environmental influences, such as changes in social values, personal incomes or technology. Governments and other organisations seek to anticipate and monitor these changes, particularly when they seem to call for a policy response. For example, government agencies must cope with increased demand for recreation on remote and ecologically fragile public lands brought about by increased mobility, or pressure on water areas resulting from increased population. In other situations governments and other organisations seek to stimulate change themselves - for example in promoting sports participation and exercise to counter increasing obesity arising from changed diet and lifestyles, or promoting participation in the arts to foster community spirit and urban regeneration. In these cases data are required to monitor trends and to assess the 'before and after' effects of policy measures.

Thus, while surveys of leisure participation and time-use have had a chequered history, where governments have had an interest in leisure - or aspects of leisure, such as sport, outdoor recreation or tourism - and where the resources have been available, periodic surveys have become the norm. In many cases the surveys are conducted by the official national statistical agency, which is also responsible for the census of population and other official statistics. In other cases the data collection is commissioned by government departments from commercial or academic survey organisations.

In addition to their policy roles, early leisure participation surveys in particular laid the groundwork for the development of a variety of research traditions in leisure studies. Researchers in the USA developed approaches based on quantitative modelling and demand prediction and on quantitative behavioural models at the individual/psychological level (Cichetti, 1972). These models have tended to be prominent in leisure research in North America ever since. In the UK and Europe the quantitative/modelling approach was soon largely abandoned in favour of a more direct use of such data in policy formation and monitoring. Fred Coalter (1999) has referred to the contrasting traditions as the North American 'leisure science' tradition and the European 'leisure studies' tradition.

Academics in the social sciences - and in leisure studies in particular - do not themselves generally have access to resources to conduct large-scale empirical research and so have been reliant on government-sponsored surveys when discussing general patterns of leisure behaviour. While theoretical and critical researchers in the leisure area have generally eschewed the survey method, they have nevertheless often drawn on the evidence of survey data as a starting point for their analyses, particularly in relation to social class and gender differences in participation levels, and in relation to publicly subsidised areas of leisure,

such as elite sport, the arts and outdoor recreation. As the field of leisure studies has grown as an area of tertiary study, leisure participation survey data have found a role in textbooks and in the classroom, in providing students with an empirical picture of leisure participation patterns.

Large-scale national leisure participation surveys have become increasingly sophisticated over the years (Cushman and Veal, 1993) but they have often had a 'bad press' from academics, particularly those wedded to the increasingly popular - and indeed orthodox - qualitative research methods in the field. In order to establish the case for undertaking or placing more emphasis on qualitative empirical research and non-empirical theoretical research, commentators often outline the limitations of quantitative methods, including surveys (e.g. Clarke and Critcher, 1985: 26-27; Rojek, 1989: 70; Henderson, 1991: 26; Aitchison, 1993; Wearing, 1998: 13-14; Wearing, 1998: 13-14). Critics often impute motives and attitudes to researchers who utilise survey methods, implying that they are somehow wedded to a somewhat outdated and extreme version of 'positivism', to the exclusion of other research approaches. The cumulative effect of repeated detailing of their failings and limitations has been to put surveys in a bad light with some of the leisure research community, and to create a 'phoney war' between alternative methodologies. The survey method has strengths and limitations, as do all research methods. For example, for the survey method, making definitive descriptive statements about the community as a whole is routine, but explanation of observed behaviour is often speculative at best. Conversely, qualitative methods are often strong on explanation but relatively weak with regard to reliable generalisation to the wider community. Thus survey methods, other quantitative methods and qualitative research methods should, in our view, be seen as complementary (Kamphorst et al., 1984).

Some of the implied criticism of surveys is that they consume substantial resources which are therefore denied to (and would go much further in) other forms of research. Roberts, for example, has stated: 'Sociologists are entitled to protest at this rampant and excessive fact-gathering' (Roberts, 1978: 28). But, as indicated above, large-scale surveys tend to be conducted for *policy* rather than theoretical purposes: they do not generally compete for the same resources as other forms of leisure research. The considerable resources devoted to the conduct of particular policy-orientated leisure participation surveys would probably not be available for purely academic research purposes. In fact, virtually all academic use of such survey data is secondary and is often undertaken with little or no specific funding. While non-survey methods also have a place in policy research, and this is being increasingly recognised by policy agencies, such research tends to be conducted in addition to, rather than instead of, survey work.

The need for governments to base policy development and evaluation on quantitative statements about the whole community is likely to remain; it would therefore appear that leisure participation and time-use surveys are, in many countries, 'here to stay'. And they are likely to be instituted in other countries which have not hitherto conducted them. It would seem wise therefore for the leisure research community to make use of this resource and, where possible, to seek to influence the design of official surveys to maximise their utility for wider research purposes. Surveys have a role to play in leisure studies alongside other research methods.

International data on leisure participation and time-use

As with national governments, some data are regularly collected by international organisations for a limited number of aspects of leisure. For example, the World Tourism Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development both assemble data on international travel (WTO, Annual; OECD, Annual). Data on working hours, which can be seen as the obverse of leisure time, and paid holidays which are specifically mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are collated by the UN's International Labour Office (ILO, Annual). International data are occasionally published on levels of ownership of some leisure goods, for example television sets and home-computers.

In the field of leisure surveys there have been few examples of truly multinational cooperation to produce data that could be compared between countries, but there have been a number of projects which have collated and compared data from a number of countries. Four relevant exercises can be identified:

- the *Multinational Comparative Time-Budget Research Project*, 1967
- the International Sociological Association series on sport and the arts, 1987-89
- the *Leisure Policies in Europe* study, 1997
- the European COMPASS study, 1999
- the Eurostat compilation of European time-use studies, 2003

These are reviewed briefly below. The pattern of country participation in these projects and in this book and its predecessor is shown in Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1 ABOUT HERE

Multinational Comparative Time-Budget Research Project

The *Multinational Comparative Time-Budget Research Project*, conducted in 13 countries in the 1960s, was coordinated through the UNESCO-funded European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences in Vienna, but was conducted by a variety of academic and governmental organisations in the participating countries (Szalai, 1972; Feldheim and Javeau, 1977). Leisure is of course only one use of time, so this study was also concerned with such issues as paid and unpaid work and family life. The study established the considerable similarity in the daily patterns of life of the populations of the 13 countries studied, the major differences arising from variations in the economic status of women and the varying levels of television ownership which existed at the time (Feldheim and Javeau, 1977). Clearly both of these factors will have changed substantially over the intervening 25 years, but no follow-up cross-national study has been attempted, although time-budget studies continue to be conducted in many countries and the Eurostat compilation referred to below has been conducted.

International Sociological Association series

Under the auspices of the International Sociological Association (Hantrais and Samuel, 1991), three volumes of collected papers on aspects of leisure in a number of countries were produced in the 1980s, covering the arts, sport and 'lifestyles'.

- *Trends in the Arts: A Multinational Perspective* (Hantrais and Kamphorst, 1987) included contributions from eight countries. Published in 1987, the book is based largely on data collected in the 1970s and early 1980s. The extent and quality of data available vary significantly from country to country. In addition to information on participation levels, data on attendances at arts venues and funding of arts organisations are also presented. One of the main conclusions drawn in the book is that participation in the arts is concentrated among the more highly educated, higher income groups in society in most of the countries studied, and the editors call for more research, including qualitative research, to explore the processes that lead to this widespread situation.
- *Trends in Sports: A Multinational Perspective* (Kamphorst and Roberts, 1989) includes contributions from 15 countries. Despite the enormous variety of social, physical and economic environments represented by the 15 countries, the editors conclude that the universal nature of sporting participation is clear; that walking, running and swimming make up the bulk of sporting activity across the world: that there are widespread common perceptions of the importance of sport in modern social life: and that it is even possible to detect trends in participation, particularly the rapid growth of participation in the 1960s and 1970s and the slowing of growth in the 1980s.
- *Leisure and Lifestyle: A Comparative Analysis of Free Time* (Olszewska and Roberts, 1989) contains contributions on nine countries. While some of the contributions present survey data on leisure participation, overall they are less concerned with presentation of data than with painting a socio-political picture of the context of leisure in each country, particularly in the context of the economic recession of the late 1980s.

Leisure Policies in Europe

Leisure Policies in Europe (Bramham et al., 1993), as the title implies, is concerned with policies rather than data on participation. The contributions, from nine countries, are set against the background of the emerging 'new world order' of the early 1990s, involving the transformation of Eastern Europe, including the collapse of the Soviet Union, the expansion of the European Community and the emergence of an international, post-industrial, post-Fordist, post-modern European society.

COMPASS study

The COMPASS (Coordinated Monitoring of Participation in Sports) program involves 19 European countries and aims: 'to examine existing systems for the collection and analysis of sports participation data in European countries with a view to identifying ways in which harmonisation may be achieved, so that greater comparability of data from different European countries will become possible' (COMPASS, 2002). In 1999 a review and secondary analysis of sport participation surveys from seven countries, was published, but it was noted that comparison between countries was problematical since 'no two surveys are identical in survey methodology' (Gratton, 1999: 49). Problems encountered included variations in the definition of sport, the use or non-use of a 'prompt card' to indicate to survey respondents what was meant by 'sport', variation in the age-range covered, differing interview methods (telephone, face-to-face, etc.) and differing sampling methods. The aim of the review was to provide a basis for future cooperation on standardising sport participation data collection methods in Europe, including the possibility of conducting a common survey. At the time of writing, however, no joint surveys have been conducted.

Eurostat Time-use Compilation

In 2002-03 Eurostat, the statistics arm of the European Communities, compiled time-use data from 13 European countries, drawing on time-use surveys conducted independently over the period 1999-2001. While the surveys varied in the time of year in which they were conducted and in the age-range of their samples, a degree of comparability was achieved by most of the countries using the 'Harmonised European Time Use' activity coding list (Aliaga and Winqvist, 2003:7). A number of tables relating to variables such as gender and age have been compiled and made available on the Eurostat web-site (Eurostat, 2003). Time-use studies are not, of course, concerned exclusively with leisure, so time-use studies have an independent existence and a body of specialist researchers (Pentland et al., 1999). The Multinational Time Use Study (MTUS), based at the University of Essex, compiles data on time-use studies on an on-going basis (Gershuny et al., 1999).

Participation by various countries in the above projects and in this book and its predecessor is partly fortuitous, reflecting networks between individual researchers, chance meetings at conferences, synchronisation of projects and personal and organisational time and resources, and the availability of facilities to overcome language barriers (all the projects have used English as the common language). But it also reflects, to some extent, the degree to which the various participant countries are involved in leisure policy and research, particularly survey-based research. Altogether 40 countries have been involved in these projects, but it is notable that only one, France, has been involved in them all, although the USA took part in all except the European projects. Of the 40 countries, 16 have been involved in only one of the projects. It is notable that there has been little involvement from Africa, South America or South-east Asia.

Only the first of the studies reviewed above was designed from the beginning as a cross-national project: the rest have relied on the use of existing data sources. With the partial exception of the time-budget studies, these projects illustrate the *lack* of comparability between nation states in terms of data sources, definitions, research traditions and administrative arrangements. One of the long-term aims of this book is to stimulate discussion on how countries conducting leisure participation surveys might move towards more comparability in future surveys so that comparisons and aggregation might be achieved. As the Eurostat exercise indicates, moves are already afoot to achieve this in the case of time-use studies. Leisure and time-use surveys are, however, not alone in facing problems of comparability: cross-national comparative research generally is faced with a myriad of problems.

Cross-national comparative social research: studying difference

Why conduct cross-national comparative research? One goal might be to produce 'league tables' - to show where different countries stand in relation to one another in addressing what Novak (1977) has termed *nation-oriented problems*. This is done continually in relation to such phenomena as economic growth rates, *per capita* income levels, taxation levels and crime rates, and these 'league tables' are often reported in the mass media. But implicit in even these comparisons, are quasi-scientific questions and answers - in Novak's terms, *variable-orientated problems*. Media and political analysts rarely refer to comparative data without also providing some commentary; they usually seek 'explanations', often in order to pursue a particular political line of argument. For example rates of economic growth are often causally linked to levels of taxation or government expenditure or levels of investment in education or research in different countries; and crime

rates are linked to levels of gun ownership or inequalities in wealth distribution. Implicit in such statements are causal models, relating one variable to another. Warwick and Osherson (1973: 7) argue: 'Rather than being a second-order activity tacked onto more basic cognitive processes, comparison is central to the very acts of knowing and perceiving'. They explain how cross-national comparative research can contribute to theory building and theory testing in social research: it helps in developing 'clearly defined and culturally salient concepts and variables'; it enables theories to be tested against a wider range of conditions than single nation research, enabling a greater degree of generality to be achieved; and it is good for the researcher, developing a 'heightened sensitivity to the differential salience and researchability of concepts in varying cultural settings' (Warwick and Osherson 1973: 8-11).

This last point suggests a need for caution: reminding us that not all countries, even in the economically developed world, experience economic recession at the same time or in the same way. Some countries are still developing industrially, while others are experiencing de-industrialisation or post-industrialism; some are grappling with the problem of a growing youth population, while others are experiencing an ageing of the population. There has been a tendency in leisure studies discourse to associate leisure with 'progress', to assume that more leisure time, more leisure activity and even more leisure expenditure is a 'good thing' and one of the dividends of social and economic progress. This raises the issue of the now questionable view that every society is seeking to achieve a 'one size fits all' form of Western modernity. The legacy of earlier modernist conceptualisations and constructions in the social sciences and in the related fields of leisure and tourism studies, in which it is assumed that the natural evolutionary development of societies is that of the modern, and postmodern, West, lives on. Elements of this teleological view of history are inevitably reflected in this book, including our own opening paragraphs above. Hall and Greben express this mind-set of Western modernity as follows:

This belief that all societies could be laid out at different points along the same evolutionary scale (with, of course the West at the topX), was a very Enlightenment conception and one can see why many non-European societies now regard (this belief) as very Euro-centric. (Hall and Greben 1992: 9)

In more recent times, it has been argued that we have moved beyond modernity to a new terrain called post-modernity. Gradually, therefore, a more plural conception of the historical and contemporary process of development has emerged in the social sciences and in the related fields of leisure and tourism studies. It lays more stress on the validity of cultural specificity and on varied paths to developed, diverse outcomes, ideas of difference, unevenness, contradiction and contingency. Hall and Greben (1992: 9) explain how many social theorists now see unevenness and difference as a more powerful historical logic than evenness, similarity and uniformity. These are contentious issues in social science, in leisure studies and, indeed, for world politics, and the questions they raise are far from settled.

The benefits of cross-national comparative research are easy to identify, but achieving the benefits in practice is more difficult. Numerous difficulties are presented to researchers attempting to overcome cultural and language barriers to conduct cross-national research. While researchers may struggle to overcome them, it is in the exploration of such differences that part of the value of cross-national comparison may lie. As Przeworski and Teune (1973: 123) put it: 'To say that a relationship does not hold because of systematic or

cultural factors is tantamount to saying that a set of variables, not yet discovered, is related to the variables that have been examined'.

Nevertheless, common variables must be identified across countries for cross-national research to be of value. We have barely begun to address these issues in cross-national leisure research, even at the definitional level. For example, surveys may indicate certain levels of participation in 'football' in various countries, but 'football' includes a variety of different sports, including American grid-iron, soccer, rugby league, rugby union, Australian Rules and Gaelic football. Some of these codes are 'national' sports, some are regional and some are very much minority sports: thus the term 'football' implies a wide variety of phenomena, rather than a single one. Nominally identical activities may have totally different meanings and significances in different cultures. For example, in many countries much leisure activity revolves around the consumption of alcohol, while in others alcohol is forbidden. In some countries gambling is part of the culture, while in others it is frowned upon or banned. Such fundamental differences might eventually lead to the identification of a range of 'functional' activities for comparison in cross-national studies - for example the idea of a 'national sport' or 'focal cultural activity'. But this assumes that comparisons can be undertaken at all.

Much of the general social science literature on cross-national comparative research focuses on data collection projects designed from the outset to be conducted cross-nationally. In the leisure area, apart from the *Multinational Comparative Time-Budget* study, researchers have had to be content with making comparisons using data already collected in separate countries, at different times and for different purposes. Any level of comparison at all is therefore problematical. This is further confounded by the growing realisation, resulting from experience with single-nation surveys, that leisure participation data are extremely sensitive to the methodology used in their collection. Responses are affected by the differing definitions of leisure itself, the age-range of respondents included in surveys, the time of year when data are collected, the use or non-use of 'prompt lists' to indicate the range of leisure activity to be considered, and the participation 'reference period' used. These issues are considered in more detail in the concluding chapter of the book.

Global trends

The data presented in this book have been collected in 15 individual countries, usually as a part of the public policy process of individual governments, as discussed above. They highlight the pattern of behaviour of a the population of particular geographical areas at particular points in time. In bringing the data together, we seek to address not just the differences in patterns of leisure participation between countries but also the similarities. It is widely posited that globalization is tending to produce a common culture across the developed world and, increasingly, among developing countries as well. In common with many aspects of modern life, leisure is affected by global forces, as can be seen in trends in activities as diverse as home-based leisure, sport, entertainment and tourism. The following broad global tendencies can be noted.

- Most leisure takes place in the home, particularly as standards of living increase and the size and range of equipment of homes increases. But increasingly the leisure 'products' which people consume in their homes are produced and distributed on a global scale, including film and television programmes, recorded music, books and magazines, computer games and the products of the Internet.

- Sport, which was once almost exclusively a neighbourhood leisure activity, is now also a global one. This is reflected not only in such overtly international phenomena as the Olympic Games and other international sporting championships, but in the internationalisation of sporting culture via broadcasting and associated marketing of clothing and equipment.
- Modern entertainment industries, including film, popular recorded music and television, have been international in nature since they emerged in the early and middle twentieth century, although the domination of Hollywood has resulted in *Americanisation* as much as globalization.
- The ultimate international leisure activity, tourism, is now seen as one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries. Particularly affected by tourism are the natural environment and cultural heritage, which are the basis of much local and international tourism, giving rise to issues of 'ownership' and conservation.

Appadural (1990) suggests that we can conceive of five dimensions of global cultural flows. First, there are *ethnoscapes* produced by flows of people: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles and guestworkers. Second, there are *technoscapes*, the machinery and plant flows produced by multi-national and national corporations and government agencies. Third, there are *finanscapes*, produced by the rapid flows of money in the international currency markets and stock markets. Fourth, there are *mediascapes*, the repertoires of images and information, the flows which are produced and distributed by newspapers, magazines, television and film. Fifthly, there are *ideoscapes*, linked to flows of images which are associated with state or counter-state movement ideologies which are comprised of elements of the Western Enlightenment world-view images of democracy, freedom, welfare, rights etc. Clearly leisure, in its many forms, is affected by and affects every one of these dimensions.

Joffre Dumazedier (1982: 187) suggested that the 'comparative method' might be used as a method for examining possible social futures - that is, one society can examine alternative futures for itself by studying the experiences of others, particularly those which are more economically developed. This can apply among economically advanced countries, since there is enormous variation in wealth and social practices even among members of the developed 'club', but it is particularly appropriate between developed and developing countries. The experiences of the handful of economically developed countries presented in this volume may provide the basis for such exercises. Further, the comparative method can be seen as relevant to the former communist countries of eastern Europe, facing the challenge of building mixed economies with new relationships between the state, the market and the individual, as indicated in the chapter on Poland and Russia in this volume. such thinking emphasises the point made above, that, even in the context of globalization, there is no longer, if there ever was, a 'one size fits all' pattern of economic and social development - there are alternative pathways. How a society develops its leisure institutions and practices is one component of the pattern of development.

Leisure phenomena are increasingly both local and international. The question of whether leisure participation patterns change simply because of variation in geographical and cultural focus is, at face value, straightforward. Of course geography and culture heavily influence the leisure participation patterns of local populations. Surfing is a popular past-time where coastlines and waves make this sport possible. Indigenous forms of art and activity are significant features of most countries' culture. There are aspects of leisure, including alcohol, drugs, tobacco and gambling, as discussed above, which may be

perceived as unhealthy, immoral or illegal in some cultures and places, but acceptable in others. Yet the question of the relative influence of local, in contrast to international, forces on leisure participation may be more problematic than first impressions might suggest.

Distinguishing the 'local' and the 'global' in leisure participation is not an easy task. At one level, the fundamental issue is the relationship of the universal (global) and the particular (local) in social science analyses, since there is a sense in which all social science is a search for universals, and at the same time, there is the idea that all activity is particular. A fundamental issue which arises here is whether there is anything distinctive or particular about a local leisure experience. With regard to one of the contributions (New Zealand) in this book, Perkins argues that the local is distinctive:

Even though it has become popular to think of ourselves as being part of a global economy, New Zealanders are still easily distinguishable from other peoples, and it is in the area of leisure that some of our differences are most obvious. This reflects a particular geographical location, history, landscape and economy and the mix of opportunities and constraints produced by them. Leisure and recreation studies has an important role to play in interpreting issues associated with New Zealand's regional and national cultural identity. (Perkins, 1997, **)

Nevertheless, like so many aspects of modern life, leisure is undoubtedly being affected by global forces. As outlined in the earlier edition of this book, globalization processes, with their associated processes of exchange, circulation and commodification which characterise modern market societies (Rojek, 1995: 92; Jarvie and Maguire, 1994: 230) point to increasing international inter-relatedness. This can be understood as leading to global *ecumene*, defined as a 'region of persistent culture interaction and exchange' (Kopytoff, 1987: 10; Featherstone, 1990) and is witnessed by a growing internationalisation of ideas and consumer expectations in leisure and recreation (Mercer, 1994).

This book

The book consists of individual chapters on leisure participation and time-use in 15 different countries. It has a particular focus on economically developed countries, but this does not mean that leisure is a concern only of nation states. Leisure is present in various guises in all cultures and forms of economic development. Most music and drama has deep cultural roots; modern sports were preceded by centuries-old local and regional sporting contests in non-industrial societies; and religious pilgrimages long pre-date modern mass tourism. Such issues as the need for open space for recreation in city environments, the role of sport in promoting health and national prestige, the status of indigenous culture in the face of mass media influences and the problems of conservation of natural and historic heritage in the face of growing population and tourist pressures are, if anything, more pressing in developing countries than in the developed world.

The contributors to this book were asked to provide information from their respective countries on: 1. national leisure participation and time-use surveys which have been conducted; 2. overall patterns of leisure participation and time-use revealed by the surveys and, where possible, trends over time; 3. inequalities in patterns of participation and time use in relation to such factors as gender, age and socioeconomic status; 4. the effects of globalization on leisure behaviour, including use of the Internet. Authors have broadly stuck to the brief, but nevertheless, the treatments vary considerably from country to country,

depending on the social and economic context and availability of and access to data. Nevertheless some commonalities emerge: while leisure is nationally and culturally specificity is also universal. These issues are addressed further in the final chapter of the book.

It is hoped that the experiences of the countries in this volume will be of interest to others as they consider the challenges of leisure participation, leisure policy and leisure development.

Notes

1. See ILO (Annual), OECD (Annual, 1993), UN (Annual).
2. Quotations from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are from Brownlie, 1992. See also Veal (2002: 11-26) for further discussion of leisure and rights.

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Table 1.1. Countries involved in cross-national leisure projects

| | Time- budget Study, 1972 ¹ | Trends in the Arts 1987 ² | Trends in sport, 1989 ³ | Life- styles 1989 ⁴ | Leisure Policies in Europe 1993 ⁵ | COMPASS 1999 ⁶ | Eurostat compil- ation ⁷ | First edn of this book, 1996 | Current book, 2003 |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Albania | | | | | | X | | | |
| Australia | | | | | | | | X | |
| Austria | | | | | | X | | | |
| Belarus | | | | | | X | | | |
| Belgium | X | | | X | | X | X | | |
| Brazil | | | | X | | | | | |
| Bulgaria | X | | X | | | X | | | |
| Canada | | X | X | | | | | X | X |
| Cyprus | | | | | | X | | | |
| Czechoslovakia/ Czech Rep. | X | X | X | | | X | | | |
| Denmark | | | | | | X | X | | |
| Estonia | | | | | | | X | | |
| Finland | | | X | | | X | X | | X |
| France | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Germany (GDR) | X | | | | | | | | |
| Germany (FDR) | X | | | | X | | | X | X |
| Great Britain/UK | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Greece | | | | | X | | | | |
| Hong Kong | | | | | | | | X | X |
| Hungary | X | X | | X | | | X | | |
| India | | | X | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ireland | | | | | | X | | |
| Israel | | | | | | | X | X |
| Italy | | | X | | | X | | |
| Japan | | | X | X | | | X | X |
| Netherlands | X | X | X | | X | X | | X |
| New Zealand | | | X | | | | X | X |
| Nigeria | | | X | | | | | |
| Norway | | | | | | X | X | |
| Peru | X | | | | | | | |
| Poland | X | | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Portugal | | | X | | | X | | |
| Puerto Rico | | X | | X | | | | |
| Slovenia | | | | | | | X | |
| Spain | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Sweden | | | | | X | X | X | |
| Switzerland | | | | | | X | | |
| USA | X | X | X | X | | | X | X |
| USSR/Russia | X | | | | X | | | X |
| Yugoslavia | X | | | | | | | |

Sources: 1. Szalai, 1972; Feldheim and Javeau, 1977; 2. Hantrais and Kamphorst, 1987; 3. Kamphorst and Roberts, 1989; 4. Olszewska and Roberts, 1989; 5. Bramham et al. 1993. 6. Gratton, 1999. 7 Aliaga & Winqvist, 2003