Mapping Leisure
Mapping Leisure
Studies from Australia, Asia and Africa
Preface

The first attempt to publish a comparative study on the spending of time in a number of countries dates back to 1972. In that year Mouton (The Hague/Paris) published the book edited by Alexandre Szalai et al., *The Use of Time: Daily Activities of Urban and Suburban Populations in Twelve Countries* (1972). The book provides information, based on time-budget studies, on time spent on quite a list of activities by the inhabitants of 12 countries, 10 of which were European. The time spent on specifically leisure activities is an important issue in the book.

In the following years, a number of comparative, more descriptive publications appeared on specific leisure activities in a number of countries. One can cite, for example, Hantrais and Kamphorst’s work (1987) on participation in arts and culture in eight countries from North America and Europe; and Kamphorst and Roberts’s work (1989) on participation in sports in 15 countries from all over the world.

Given the global developments that took place over recent decades, among them globalization itself—as part of which can be considered the worldwide spread of mass communication amenities and their growing reach in terms of coverage as well as applications—but also booming worldwide tourism, we have taken this initiative to produce a new volume on developments in leisure from a worldwide perspective.

As the title suggests, *Mapping Leisure* is a collection of articles by leisure specialists from a great variety of countries spread over Australia, Asia and Africa. Each of them has written here from their perspective about things that they felt to be important for understanding the ‘way leisure went’ through the ages in the lives of the inhabitants of their country. As a result, this book reads almost like a novel. Every chapter has something specific to tell, insights to offer, and things to teach. Due to the wide variety of discussions, there is hardly any repetition, but a number of cross-cutting themes, such as colonialism. As far as leisure is concerned, colonialism has affected different regions in different ways. Another theme that keeps coming up is the endurance of, and resistance to the fading of, rituals and traditions, often based in religion, but then again the outcome is not everywhere the same. Another major theme is globalization and the intrusion of new mass communication technologies during the last three or four decades. Globalization did not influence
leisure everywhere in the same way, neither did booming tourism, and these differences emerge repeatedly in the book’s discussions.

The editors hope that readers of this volume will enjoy hours of leisurely reading.

References


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Chapter 1
Introduction: Mapping Leisure Studies

Ishwar Modi and Teus J. Kamphorst

There is an inherited capacity of humankind to have pastimes. These practices in different countries are given different names and concepts. In the Western world, at the beginning of industrialization, such practices were usually labelled ‘free time’ or ‘leisure’. During that period the term referred to non-obligatory time, or time in which a person was free from household and/or industrial salaried work performances, duties and practices. As the connotation indicates, duties were conceived as being ‘not free’ times, or being obligatory and compulsory. From the twenty-first-century perspective one is inclined to label household and work conditions in the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century—though at that time considered ‘normal’—as rather ‘inhuman’. Workdays of 12 h or more for six or even seven days a week for the entire year were no exception in the West. Salaries were low and work conditions generally poor.

Regarding the terminology: the term ‘free time’ is used to underline the aspects of ‘being free from household duties and industrial work’ and of ‘time’. When emphasis is placed on the activities performed during free time, the term ‘leisure’ is used. Reading the contributions to this volume, it is exactly with these concepts and terminology that the discussion starts.

What Is Leisure?

Some of the authors of the 16 contributions that are included in this volume state that not only in many societies do the words ‘free time’ and ‘leisure’ not exist, but also that, for example, in prehistoric times, life just went the way it went without a
sharp distinction between obligatory and non-obligatory activities. It is within this framework that in some chapters the ‘surplus energy’ theory is mentioned: human beings can enter into and take part in pastimes only when they are able to meet the needs for survival in a time-span that is shorter than the total available time. So, in the case when a person is not too tired and falls asleep, there is energy and time left for non-primarily-survival-directed behaviour that one could name ‘free time’. This surplus energy approach, which actually resembles very much the Western industrial concept of leisure as being free from obligations to earn a living and getting daily life organized, falls into the category of pastimes in terms of time ‘… being free from …’ obligations/duties.

Other authors in this volume write that in their cultures this distinction between obligatory and non-obligatory time spending is not applicable. For example, in China, several concepts that relate to what is called leisure in the West have connotations referring to the Greek concept of scholê. Following the great Chinese philosophers such as Confucius and Dao, it refers to formal or informal education or time spending aimed at personal or societal improvement. This includes being educated by others as well as self-improvement. The final goal of this process is to establish/experience harmony within and between the soul, the mind and the body as well as with the natural and human environment(s). So, in the case of China, the English language concept of leisure does not refer to ‘… being free from …’ (obligations/duties), but to ‘… spending time on/being busy with/being involved in …’ a (self-)developmental process.

Again, in other contributions to this volume, the authors argue that for non-secular Muslims worshipping Allah at any time and place, life as such, including free time and leisure, is supposed to be subordinated to a higher goal. Secular leisure activities are suspect and might easily turn into sinful behaviour. In Chap. 6 on Indonesia, the country with the highest Muslim population in the world, an interviewee tells the author that he practises swimming. His motivation is that the Almighty gifted him a body for which he is grateful and which he should take care of. Swimming is considered to maintain and/or improve health, which makes it fall into the category of allowed, even recommended, religious leisure activities. Moreover, the interviewee goes for swimming in the local swimming facility very early in the morning, preventing him from having to swim with women and/or being tempted to have a glance at some of their body parts. These chapters therefore reflect the critique that the predominantly Western, English language term ‘leisure’ and its connotations have faced since inception. The term simply does not fit all cultures.

But not only non-Western cultures face difficulty with the term leisure. Of course, any definition of whatever phenomenon has exemptions, which it should include but does not. The point, however, is: how important are those exemptions? In the West, work conditions have improved to a level where going to work is no longer primarily experienced as a duty or obligation. Furthermore, in the West nowadays, less than half of the population is actively involved in the salaried labour force. Does being free from paid work become one of the main criteria for leisure, meaning that the spare-time activities of children and pensioners shouldn’t be called
‘leisure’? To ‘solve’ this problem, with the help of leisure psychologists, leisure scientists have developed a parallel concept of leisure; namely, that one also can speak about leisure when a person does not experience outside or inside pressure or constraints when doing what he/she does. In short, the distinctive criterion is not that a person is objectively free from obligations, but that he/she feels free.

The criticism of many of the contributors to this volume on Australia, Asia and Africa not only entails the aspect of ‘… being free from …’ or ‘being free to …’, or of ‘… feeling free …’, but also leisure’s fundamentals and aims and practices. To start with the fundamentals: for a number of the contributors, the aspect of relative factual freedom or a relative experience of freedom in the West which, as stated, are regarded as distinctive criteria for speaking about leisure or not, are in reality non-existing human inventions—virtual products of the brain. To turn to leisure’s aims and practices, some of the contributors who seriously criticize the Western fusion of the concepts of leisure and freedom refer to the Frankfurt School, which states that a person at leisure who, in his/her own experience is/feels relatively free, is not free at all because he/she is just a blind consumer, addicted to gathering material wealth and following the slogans of or being manipulated by the leisure industry and entrepreneurs who make them believe that buying their products is an act of freedom and/or sets them free.

So, taking into account all these critiques and comments/remarks, one finds quite a number of the chapters in this volume arguing that the concept of leisure and its connotation are, first, not fitting specific historical situations and, second, old-fashioned Western definitions. Therefore, the question arises: what is leisure from a global perspective? Or, should we conclude that even if we exclude from the concept the aspect of experienced freedom, due to the nineteenth and early twentieth-century contextual character of the term, it is impossible to formulate a definition that is acceptable to leisure scientists and practitioners all over the world? The chapters in this volume on Australia, Asia and Africa reveal that the differences in approach are very substantial and difficult to bring under one common denominator. That is not an issue as long as we, the leisure experts, clarify and decide on the purpose and definition to follow in specific contexts. However, there might be another reason to thoroughly re-think the present leisure concept: more specifically, this element of freedom that sets it apart from other spheres of life.

Traditions, Rituals and Leisure: The Persistence of Culture

All the chapter authors who took the phrase ‘… through the ages’ literally, write, sometimes very extensively, about the history of leisure in their country, and address at a certain point the importance of traditions and rituals and related forms of leisurely time spending. De Grazia in his standard work of Time, Work and Leisure (1962) mentions that before the Industrial Revolution, there were hundreds of traditional and ritual festivities every year. Those had, to quote Stebbins, ‘a serious (leisure) aspect’ (2007), such as religious holy days when the clergy
expected believers to attend the service, but which also had, what we would call nowadays, a leisure aspect. Meeting, chatting, dancing, playing games, engaging in sport competitions like horse riding, drinking; these were all practised at traditional festivals and rituals. We are tempted to believe—and again the idea is widely supported by writers of the following chapters in this volume—that, as far as religious holy days, festivals and rituals were concerned, many of them fully focused on coming to terms with supranatural powers (gods, ancestors, ghosts, evil forces), sometimes asking these for protection, for forgiveness or fulfilment of a specific wish; this is more or less in line with what currently happens in many religions. The question is: Should those religion-driven activities such as attending a service be regarded as leisure? Some authors say ‘yes’, for example, because they were practised in spare time not devoted to mere survival; others label them as a separate category.

Whatever the categorization (as seen in the example of the ancestors of the Germans, the ‘Germanen’ during Roman Empire times, who were said to offer their wives as trophy to the winner of gambling games), it becomes clear that life was not limited to work, war, sleep, and religious duties. However, what makes those traditions and rituals so interesting is their obvious persistence and endurance. Even in circumstances where the rationale for practising traditional customs and rituals had disappeared a long time back, they continued and continue to play a role in spare-time pastimes. Holy days became holidays; the custom of having at least one day off per week (Friday, Sunday) is widespread; celebrating the start of the seasons or of the full moon or the longest day; going for a trip only at astrologically propitious periods; New Year rituals, including staying up through midnight, wishing each other 1 min after the best for the year that has just begun (by the way, not all countries mark New Year on the same calendar day) and having loud fireworks to frighten the evil spirits; these all stem from past rituals.

To go one step further, as many authors reveal, culturally intrusive new forms of time spending (the result of globalization in recent decades) are modified to make them fit into their new country’s existing traditions and rituals. To take the example of the Philippines: in earlier times, on free days and in the evenings, the upper classes used to move around in their carriages in the central park of Manila to see people pass by, occasionally socialize, while listening to music. Nowadays, they continue to do this in the same park with modern vehicles and listening to the same, but also to different, modern music. Or, to draw from Chap. 14 on ‘Evolution of Leisure Patterns in Morocco: From Traditional Spiritual Pilgrims to Contemporary Mall Wanderers’, the inhabitants of Morocco used to take a walk during their festive days and meet family or acquaintances in the streets or in the old medina (marketplaces). Now, too, they go for walks; however, as far as facilities are concerned, they choose as destinations the highly sophisticated shopping malls, not to buy anything, but to meet others and enjoy the environment.

This endurance of traditions is also obvious in religious practices themselves. Christianity has been introduced by the West to many countries around the world. Yet, as the chapters in this volume show, in many cases, the ways of practising it have not become Western at all. Veena Sharma observes in Chap. 13 that one can
talk of ‘African Christianity’, thereby indicating a new religion mixed with former religious traditions and rituals to fit African societies. And to end with an example from South Africa, despite more than 25 years of desegregation, in South Africa ethnic groups still do not seem to mix during their free time. Would the careful reader of this discussion chapter agree with the statement that, from the viewpoint of leisure as it is defined and understood today, this continuing separation is to be considered negative only when it is felt to be a constraint, or experienced as blocking potentially life-enriching activities and experiences? Or is this a bigger ideological issue? Is emotion at stake to the extent that even though in practice one race would not mingle with the other race, they would wish to have that option?

**Hostility of the Clergy and Upper Classes Towards Leisure**

Going through all the chapters, it is remarkable that many of the authors refer to the basically hostile attitudes and practices of upper and leading classes towards pastimes of the masses. Colonists occupied, sometimes ruined, but in any case tried to profit as much as possible, from their colonies. Therefore, spare time in the definition of the colonial leading classes—following Weber in ‘The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit (in German ‘Geist’) of Capitalism’—was idle, non-productive time.

So, for example, in Mozambique (Chap. 15) the Portuguese colonists put in place all sorts of work-laws, forcing the locals to spent a considerable part of their time in labour without salary. Not meeting the requirements led to imprisonment and physical punishment and, often, death. Were the Mozambicans better off under the reign of the Marxist political party FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) that came to power in 1985 after the end of colonialism? The answer is ‘yes’ and ‘no’. ‘Yes’ because the FRELIMO leaders did not come from another country but were their own countrymen. However, as far as leisure was concerned, the new leaders were of the same opinion as the colonists, namely, that free time was idle time and that it prevented the population from becoming so-called ‘new men’, which for their country meant hard-working, decent, responsible, honest, ethical, non-corruptible and so on.

Except perhaps for China during a specific historical period and then more or less limited to Chinese philosophers, the chapters reveal that during history all kings, sultans, high-ranking civil servants, leaders and representatives of in fact all the religions all over the world have had a critical attitude towards leisure. One of the reasons, for example in Japan, was that leisure simply did not fit in a culture of what we, from a distance, would consider to be a form of collective workaholism. In the case of Japan, the culture requires total subordination to the authority, public as well as private, and sensitivity to judgement of the social groups within which people identify themselves. Leisure, for which a new word was invented in 1990 in Japan (cf. Fuess, 2006; Nagatomo, 2015), came into the picture in Japan in a period
of economic crisis, due to a decrease in exports. In that period leisure was regarded as offering a way out of the economic crisis. Establishing an economy for leisure products could provide work for the unemployed. However, as Scott North describes in his contribution (Chap. 9) on the persistence of traditions, following the Japanese approach, leisure was collectively organized and took the form of state-controlled holiday resorts all over Japan, often at the cost of destroying the natural environment.

What was and is behind this sometimes overtly hostile attitude of the leading groups and classes towards pastimes of the masses? Would it be too much to state that the main reason was and is that leisure conflicts with the expectation that the vulgus in populo (or inferior people) should not enjoy free time themselves, but devote their lives to facilitating the upper classes’ life chances? This holds true in all aspects of privileged leisure life, to which, by the way, the lower classes, occasionally and exceptionally, have been allowed access, very often not as participants but as spectators (Veblin 1899). Or, would it be too much to state that the reason it is so difficult to have the clergy and the elites pay attention to leisure and culture other than when it generates income, such as in tourism, is that they live off the pockets and wallets of the lower classes; in short, from tax or gift money generated through the lower classes’ work efforts? And does this also mean that the fight for attention to leisure will fail, unless leisure is further commodified and commercialized? The authors to this volume are likely to answer ‘yes’. For the field of leisure studies, the question is: By following the elite’s preferred direction, what do we gain and what do we lose?

Perhaps the answer to that question can be found, among others, by analysing what happened through the ages to toys for children and/or to tourism. In both cases there was a development from self- and homemade ‘products’ to ready-to-use ones. As some authors write, in both cases there was an increase in easy consumerism. Buying ready-to-use products has the advantage that it creates more spare time for leisure activities. However, in the case of toys, it diminishes the learning experience of making toys oneself or seeing them made by one’s parents. And in the case of tourism, going for an all-inclusive arrangement means that one chooses to bestow one’s future tourism experience in the hopefully capable hands of the professionals in the sector.

But what does that do to leisure satisfaction? Sport inquiries reveal that more satisfaction results from winning against a strong opponent than a weak one. It gives greater satisfaction to master a more difficult Chopin Nocturne or a difficult game on the PlayStation than an easier one. So, returning to the question of what we gain or lose when our leaders and authorities, driven by economic motives, start to meddle in leisure, an answer may be found in Chaps. 9 and 10 on Japan and North Korea (Chaps. 9 and 10): here, more bureaucracy, more consumerism, more professionalism, more ready-to-use leisure supplies have led to reduced leisure satisfaction and challenges.
Globalization

All the authors in this volume (from a chronological viewpoint, logically at the end of their chapters) mention globalization, and more specifically the relatively recent worldwide spread of the mass media, as a factor deeply influencing leisure. They mention film, radio, television and means of interactive electronic communication such as phones and, later, mobile phones, the Internet and social media. In Chap. 6, Modi speaks about ‘the ICT generation’ youngsters spending a substantial part of their free time on the Internet and on computers and other electronic devices.

Despite the attempts of some governments, such as those in China and Indonesia, to control the information coming in from abroad, globalization in terms of opening the world to and for others has proved to be a phenomenon that cannot be stopped. The contributors write that through the mass media, for better or worse, all sorts of new information reach audiences in their countries. This also holds for information about other forms of leisure practised in other cultures. As mentioned above, some of these fit the receiving country and have been adopted, very seldom just the way they were, and more usually in modified form. This holds, for example, for films in India and Nigeria (see Chap. 16). Film technology was brought to these countries at the beginning of the 20th century. India, for example, is a large market for Western cinema, particularly in English. However, many theatres exclusively show domestic products, such as the well-known Bollywood films.

In Nigeria and other colonized countries the introduction and distribution of film were gradual and were controlled by the colonists. They started with the import of film equipment to the villages. Mainly educational programmes were shown, such as on foresting, or on using fertilizers in agriculture, but also (mainly to village audiences) films on hygiene and other subjects that would lead to changes in behaviour benefiting not only the inhabitants but also the colonists in terms of preventing indigenous people from falling ill and thereby keeping them fit to work. As was to be expected, after the colonial period, everywhere film became less popular.

Baseball and basketball were adapted to local culture in the Philippines (see Chap. 11), following introduction by Americans during the period of US colonization. In particular, since Filipinos in general do not have the height for dunking a ball in the net, they were trained in other ways of scoring.

The introduction of television was gradual, too. Beginning with one screen in a village, later on economic developments and improvement of the medium itself made it possible for people to buy and install their own equipment in their homes. All authors write that this process of privatization of television resulted in a rather substantial change in spare-time spending. According to the authors, not only has the time spent at home increased, but leisure too has become more individualized.

In this discussion on the influence of globalization on leisure we cannot forget the worldwide indignation on New Zealand being visited by a totally white South African rugby team. That New Zealand, even when faced with pressure from outside, did not cancel the visit was due also to the country’s ‘rather conservative
character’ (Chap. 3), brought in through the generally higher-class and well-to-do condition of its immigrants, in contrast to its neighbour Australia, which was initially mainly a deportation colony for British criminals and outlaws and so housed ‘lowly’ immigrants. It is noteworthy that in the process of mobilization of the global indignation towards New Zealand, nearly everywhere the available mass media played an important role.

What the authors consider influential is also the introduction of computers with the Internet and mobile phones and other mobile devices. Regarding the latter, in many countries the introduction of mobiles not only obviated the need for costly landline infrastructure, but also created the option to communicate with anybody from wherever wireless communication transmitting stations were in place. This instant and immediate networking with others has increasingly taken over the increased individual spare time that accompanied the introduction of radio and television broadcasting systems.

Only a few chapters in this volume address the question of whether the globalization through the worldwide spread of mass communication should be regarded as the mass-media industry looking for new markets for their products, or as more demand-driven development. This is probably one of the rare occasions in history where supply and demand fully go together, which coincidental combination also explains the speed with which the process has materialized.

**Leisure and Life Through the Ages**

What we see from the above discussion, then, is that there has been some concept of leisure in all ages and for all age groups. Going through history, pastimes are reflected in prehistoric paintings on Libyan rocks, and in the war games on electronic devices. Even in societies that are at war and/or controlled by intruders and invaders, as was the case during colonialism, there is leisure in the autochthonous/indigenous communities. In war-zones children continue with their football games in the midst of missiles flying around. During the First World War, at the front in northern France, a ceasefire was organized to enable the soldiers to celebrate Christmas. To occasionally have pastimes and be at leisure seems to be a fundamental human drive.

Furthermore, pastimes are not just superficial forms of behaviour without any other value. As many of the authors write, their permanency and resistance to change and fading away indicate that this aspect of life is embedded in and at the same time a constituting aspect of a country’s culture. For Turkey (Chap. 12), it even holds that differences in leisure are a major element of the distinction between the four fractions of middle-class Turks. This can partly be explained by the fact that leisure is strongly present in traditions, rituals and customs, and in norms and value systems that are felt to be worth maintaining.

Through the ages all attempts of whatever clergymen from whatever denomination and upper-class leaders to tame and control leisure’s obvious manifestations
have failed. Whatever measures the holy and powerful put upon their subordinates, people have found ways to ‘escape’ and get involved in leisurely forms of behaviour, even in prison.

From the viewpoint of the person or group at leisure, it can be said that leisure, including arts and culture, stands at the end of the economic chain. From the money that comes into a family, a part is reserved for meeting survival requirements, such as food, clothes, housing, and energy. If any, the remaining sum is saved for worse times or spent on leisure. One would think that this fact of being at the end of the economic chain would make leisure vulnerable to changes in the previous links of the chain. Even in countries with income figures below the poverty level of $1.00 per day, even in periods of great misery, people tend to continue to perform their rituals and follow their traditions. And, as some of the chapters reveal, for inhabitants of more wealthy countries it is valid that there are a number of free-time activities that have such a high position in the value rank order of individuals, communities and societies that they are relatively independent from a decrease in income. In the Western world, going on holidays, but also celebrating birthdays or holy days or networking through mass communication have such a high-value rank-order status.

Despite its mass, leisure is an open phenomenon. It tends to easily absorb new stimuli. In this regard, leisure looks like cane: it bows with the wind but does not break. On the contrary, every blow seems to make it stronger in terms of becoming bigger and more varied. The relatively recent process of globalization can be regarded as such a storm. New technologies provide options for pastimes that were not practised before and are easily incorporated.

**Leisure’s Twenty-First Century Context**

The authors were asked to ‘map leisure and life through the ages’ in their respective countries. From the discussions in the chapters, it seems that leisure is all around, substantial, persistent, durable, strong; it has mass, and scores highly in the value-ranking order. Looking back, it is a pity that we did not ask the authors to also briefly address the future of leisure, so this hasn’t been covered in detail in this volume. Nevertheless, it is an important element about which, also based on the writings presented in this volume, there is more to say. For example, can we assume that the sketched developmental processes of leisure are linear? In short, can we assume that leisure activities that are increasing will continue to do so, those that are stable will remain so, and those that are decreasing will slowly fade away? The chapters address the issue of, in terms of leisure-time spending, the rather important changes in leisure resulting from the introduction of the mass media and communication devices. In just a couple of decades, television watching became the favourite leisure activity of the world population. It influenced leisure, among others, in the sense that leisure everywhere became more individualistic.
Leisure, being a social, contextual phenomenon, apart from being strong and resistant to change, also inhales and breathes the spirit of the time in which it manifests itself. What, in those terms, is there to say about the future? Nobody can and shall deny that there are a number of splendid opportunities for leisure, but also severe threats. The mass media will continue to ever more intensively inform everyone about each other, including about different ways of leisure spending. Will this lead to a process of further unification—one world, one people, one behaviour—or of increasing nationalism/regionalism, and how will one and/or the other influence leisure? Or will both tendencies—as is indicated by using the construction ‘and/or’ in the previous sentence—unfold together? That would be very nice because unification may lead to breaking down the borders that keep continents, countries, societies, communities and individuals apart and divided, while regionalization may result in preserving the differences between those entities, differences that make life interesting.

However, apart from unification/regionalization there are so many more developments that may influence the field of leisure. For example, some experts say that within 40 years the Earth will run out of crude oil. Would there be another source of energy enabling us and/or our children and grandchildren to, among other activities, visit other countries during holidays? Leisure faces exactly the same threats that all societies do, and will confront: war, poverty and hunger in certain regions of the world; the exhaustion of conventional forms of energy; the expected increase of scarcity in raw materials—according to some the fuse that will ignite another world war; environmental damage of all kinds due to air, earth and water pollution; climate change and, consequently, an increasing number of natural catastrophes such as floods, mega-hurricanes and landslides; overpopulation (can the world feed the forecasted 9.7 billion mouths in the year 2050?); extinction of plant and animal species of plants; destruction of eco-systems; increasing inequality; increasing consumerism; worldwide economic crisis; corruption; illiteracy and lack of proper education; decreasing supply of clean water; insufficient and inefficient sewage systems causing illnesses; the weakening of social structures and bonds in many parts of the world due to increasing individualism, egocentrism and egoism; and, last but not least, nationalism preventing people from having a worldview and becoming world citizens.

Leisure and pastimes are part of life on Earth and, whether one likes it or not, leisure studies will be affected by the changes listed above. How are researchers going to position the field within these processes? Among others questions, one may ask: Is it time to go for a new leisure paradigm?

References


Part I
Australia
Chapter 2
Australian Leisure: From Antiquity to Modernity

Francis Lobo

This chapter traces the development of leisure in Australia from antiquity to modernity. It deals with the topic by discussing leisure through slices of time as: prehistoric living; colonization; post-1945; and contemporary Australia. The chapter shows how the earliest people lived. After colonization, the import of leisure activities occurred as indigenous leisure developed in parallel. The development of modern leisure passed through stages of nationhood, wars, and natural disasters to better times when the country’s economy developed and people were more affluent to enjoy improving lifestyles. The development of Australians was affected by social conditions and so was their leisure.

Pre-historic Living

The lifestyle of indigenous Australians was illustrated by the images in a board game devised by Mackintosh (c. 1940). The game had 26 stations before arriving at the corroboree, a gathering of Aboriginal people. Each image, illustrated in thumbnail form (italicized in text following), depicted human activity and Australian fauna. It started with "hunters setting out for the corroboree." In sequence they "dug for honey ants, met storks, threw boomerangs, discovered a dry water hole," passed an "emu, made a fire and stopped at mya mya (home) with the family. They then proceeded past a lyrebird, cut a spear, decorate the spear while a kookaburra laughed. Pointing a spear as koalas looked on a bush fire burned and a tribal war broke out. Spears were thrown, spearheads were made and axe heads were ground as the party went past a platypus. Preparing for the corroboree, the hunter took his prey, a canoe was cut to cross the river, a lost culungu (cradle) was found, bullroarers were sounded as the party danced to the corroboree where

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© The Editor(s) 2018
I. Modi and T.J. Kamphorst (eds.), Mapping Leisure,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3632-3_2
rituals, dances and singing were performed. The images on the board game illustrated how indigenous Australians had lived 40,000 years earlier.

Activities were categorized into three domains. *Homo Faber* (Frisch, 1974), Man the Worker; *Homo Ludens* (Huizinga, 1971) Man the Player; and *Homo Famillon*, (Latin for Family Man). *Homo Faber* took precedence over *Homo Ludens*. Tool making was essential for men as hunters and women as gatherers.

The domain of *Homo Ludens* included artistic activities, games, storytelling and amusements. Intellectual and artistic activities (represented in arts, dancing and music) provide evidence of a complex, sophisticated civilization developed over the course of 40,000 years or more. These imaginative endeavours, especially in the nature and function of art, music, and dance in Aboriginal culture, provide continuity of creativity in the longest unbroken history known to humankind. Games were part of traditional culture. After the evening meal, adults and children sat around the fire, enjoying a cheerful community atmosphere. Children joined in singing and clapping or sat and listened as old men told them stories from the great Dreamtime. Girls played with dolls and copied the art of ‘mothering’ from their own mothers. So while at play, they were unwittingly preparing themselves for the future. With boys, ball games were popular. Dancing was a common pastime (Ellis, 1994).

The families in Aboriginal households were egalitarian and extended. Each member gave support of every kind to other members. Families shared food and supported kindred groups. The principal function of men was hunting. Women were the gatherers. Parenting the children was their function as was the care of the aged. Older children were often asked to help with food gathering and helped in care of the younger siblings (Ellis & Ellis, 1982).

The dwelling place was known as the ‘mya mya’. It was the place where families slept and stored belongings. Families were neither idle nor rich. Consequently, Veblen (1970) would find it difficult to develop a theory of the leisure class. Membership of the leisure class is an exemption from industrial toil and the mark of success is ‘conspicuous consumption’. It was a term used by Veblen for spending for the sake of prestige. In Aboriginal society there was no time for ladylike uselessness. Women had to work. They were the gatherers. They looked after the children, narrated stories of the Dreamtime and prepared meals for the family. Play was instinctive with the children. The boys competed against each other and the girls played imaginative games.

Evidence from photographs in the 1930s taken of communities in remote parts of Australia, untouched by outside civilization, reveal how Aboriginals had lived from the earliest times. The photographs show children at play and children with pets.

Images show music for dancing being provided by beating the ground with sticks (Cockatoo Creek, Central Australia, 1931). Children sing *Mamu tjitji* song as they make a chain with their hands and boys practise spearing by aiming at bark discs (Warapuju Tr. Warburton Range, W.A., 1935a, b). Images of girls at play show them playing fathers and mothers (Ilaura Tribe, Macdonald Downs, Central Australia, 1930). The children first built a windbreak made of stone and they then
used pieces of stick and bark to represent people in the camp. Another girl leaped along a line of stones that had been arranged by children (Wituwiluru Waterhole, Mann Range, 1933). Australian aborigines did not usually tame or domesticate animals. Young emus were occasionally brought back to camp. Emu chicks, their stripes conspicuous against the background of earth, made a happy picture in the camp in far north-eastern Arnhem Land. Two broods were represented among the five chicks shown in a photograph, four showing the brighter, more clearly defined stripes being much younger than the fifth, taller bird (Caledoy Bay, 1935). Children befriended young dingo pups (Warapuju Tr. Warburton Range, W.A., 1933). A young boy showed his skills in clutching two pampidi lizards around the neck so that they did not bite or escape him (Nyadamarda Tr., Mandora Station, N.W. Australia, 1953).

The foregoing examples show that play among children is universal from the earliest of humans. According to Lynch and Veal (2006), Aboriginals in early times did not have a concept of leisure and work as in Western society. They stated that traditional Aboriginal societies lived culturally and environmentally integrated lifestyles. They referred to the lifestyles of hunter-gatherer societies as eco-leisure. In hunter-gatherer societies, while playful and pleasurable activities were engaged in for their own sake, such playfulness and pleasure could be features of any aspect of life. There was no clear demarcation between work and non-work and no separate category of leisure.

The definition of leisure and quality of life that has dominated ‘Western’ thinking has three perspectives: ‘adopted a measure of time’ (time); ‘as a container of activity’ (activity); ‘and in terms of meaning’ (experience) (Jackson, 2006: 3). Although Aborigines did not have a concept of leisure as Western society understands it, their behaviour points to four dimensions. The first and fundamental dimension of Aboriginal leisure is setting. Aboriginals consider setting, (a derivative of place) as the essence of living. According to Burnum (1988):

The land had been under (our) control and guidance going back to the Dreamtime; every hill, valley, river, animal and plant had been placed in the landscape for the use of the people …. In Europe as people developed their civilization from the caves to the cathedrals, they left clear evidence of their achievement for future generations to admire. In Australia, the land itself is the cathedral and worship is not confined to any four walls. Each step is a prayer and every form in the landscape – and everything that moves in it – were put there specifically for people to use and manage. (p. 8)

The landscape board game (Mackintosh, c., 1940) depicted the place where Aboriginals lived and it incorporated the activities of birds, animals and humans. The icons were the settings in which ‘work’, ‘leisure’ and other family activities were integrated into living. Consequently, setting was fundamental to all human activity. It was Goffman who pointed out the importance of setting for human activity:

First there is ‘setting’, involving furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items that supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played before, within, or upon it (pp. 32–33).
If human action occurs in a setting, why should leisure activity be exempted? It is the position of the author that setting be regarded as the fourth dimension of leisure.

Colonization

Australia was colonized in 1788. According to Hamilton-Smith and Robertson (1977), the first fleet society brought over to Australia was differentiated with 19 officers, 190 other ranks, 30 wives, 12 children and about 729 convicts. In the first two decades of settlement authorities paid little attention to leisure and recreation except to curb drunkenness and other ‘immoral’ behaviour of the convicts. Major holidays in England were celebrated. Sports and pastimes were transplanted from Britain. Daly (1971) reported that cricket was recorded in 1804. The convicts brought with them popular pastimes such as cockfighting and bull baiting (Hamilton-Smith & Robertson, 1977). Government recognition of recreation was limited. As part of active policy, Hyde Park in Sydney was established. Otherwise, citizens were advised to use their free time to uplift themselves and further their education (Hamilton-Smith & Robertson, 1977).

Transplantation of most British sports and pastimes had exceptions. Australian Football was an innovation of team sport. Surfing and surf-life saving were characteristically Australian innovations. The relatively favourable climate over much of Australia encouraged many to participate in outdoor activities. Uniquely Australian activities such as sheaf tossing, log chopping, chasing the greasy pig, and (today) tractor ballet took place at country and agricultural shows (Hamilton-Smith & Robertson, 1977).

In colonial times, Australia was a man’s world both in numbers and tradition. Women were committed to domestic life and were outside public view. A few bucked the trend. On 17 October 1836 Eliza Fraser swept to the Herald office in Sydney to ‘tell a terrible tale of shipwreck, death and white slavery at the hands of Aborigines’ (p. 34) (Personal communication, Eliza visits the Herald, 17 October 1836). Lady Henrietta Macquarie, wife of Governor Macquarie, is commemorated in more colonial landmarks than any other woman before or since. Her letter to the Herald in 1825 described how husband Lachlan Macquarie was forced to spend the last years of life trying to clear his name of ‘being too accepting of reformed convicts, too dismissive of landed gentry and erecting buildings too extravagant for a penal colony’ (p. 25) (Letter to the Herald, The death of Governor Lachlan Macquarie, 3 November 1825). Caroline Chisholm assisted thousands of female immigrants to secure work on many farms. Sickened by exploitation of boatloads of immigrant girls, she talked her way to see the governor of the colony and proprietors of the Herald to win support in what was to become her life’s work (Female Immigrants, 1841).
Males dominated Australian leisure and recreation. In the mid-1920s there were reports that traditions were trampled upon by young females as youth was seen by them to be paramount. This type of young woman was described as ‘the flapper’. However, one report described an individual ‘Australian lassie’ as:

A clean-limbed, wholesome, sports-loving girl, who can play a game of tennis, golf, or hockey with anyone, who can run a boat, or run car all day if need be, and dance half the night .... (Lifestyle Chasers, 1926: 26)

Literary arts at the turn of the twentieth century were in their infancy. When asked to compare literature in the USA and Australia, Franklin (1945) said:

I used to say that Australia was a little girl with pigtails and America a grand young lady with her hair up, and out in society in one of those décolleté gowns, with the squeezed waist and long train, which was the ambition of the normal little girls in that day. (p. 78)

In 1901, Miles Franklin wrote her first novel: the classic My Brilliant Career. The Miles Franklin Literary Award, established in 1954 with the bequest from the author, is the most prestigious literary award in Australia. She was keen to see Australian literature flourish and understood the struggles authors faced. The annual Award celebrates Australian character and creativity. It nurtures the continuing life of literature about Australia.

Radio broadcasts were introduced to Australia in 1923. Radio changed the Australian way of life by its accessibility to individuals in their homes. Family members performed daily routines with the radio on in the background. It was a constant companion of the housewife as she worked on her daily chores (Johnson, 1981). With electricity, urbanization and available leisure time, the cinema started to flourish at the turn of the century. Movies were the mainstay of entertainment for the common people and they continued to flourish till the advent of television in the 1950s (Clark, 1987). During the 1920s the car opened the vast outdoors to urbanites. They were able to bushwalk, camp and picnic in rural areas. As visitor numbers increased to wilderness areas, it was necessary to protect them. One such area was the Blue Mountains National Park in New South Wales (Powell, 1980). The Parks and Playground Movement, established in the 1920s was in response to social problems arising out of rapid urban development. Areas were set aside to offer children an opportunity to play and provide adults chances to recreate (Taylor, 1993). As Australian sporting traditions and games unique to the nation took hold, there was a rise in spectators to sporting events and the cinema. As Lynch and Veal (2006) described, ‘sport and spectatorism continued to be central to the leisure culture of Australia and in the 1930s were vital to people’s psychic survival through the Depression’ (p. 77). The onset of the Second World War interrupted the customary lifestyles of Australians.
Post-1945 to Contemporary Australia

Scripting the post-Second World War period, Lynch and Veal (2006) stated that Australia had a huge demographic change from 7.4 million in 1945 to 20 million at the start of the twenty-first century. The popularity of radio grew. The introduction of television in 1956 was a major revolution; music, drama, and national and international shows could be watched in the privacy of the home. After the introduction of television, Australians were able to view international events such as the 1956 and 2000 Olympics in Melbourne and Sydney respectively, cricket matches and the running of the Melbourne Cup. Television provided a shift for Australians to be spectators in their leisure. Mercer (1994) labelled the nation as the ‘spectator society’.

In 1924 the life expectancy was 61 years. The lifespan was characterized by three groupings—child, adult and old age. In 1968, life expectancy was 71 years and the groupings of child and adult were separated by ‘teen’. In 2008, life expectancy was 81 years and several groupings made up the lifespan—child, adolescence, adult, lifestyle (and others) and the elderly (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2004). Australians generally are living longer (see Fig. 2.1).

In 2010, Australia’s population surpassed 21.5 million. According to Salt (2006), 15 million Australians fell within the ‘orbital influence’ of capital cities. The suburbanites were the largest cultural grouping. Approximately 11 million lived in the suburbs. One million lived in the inner suburbs. Coastal metropolitan areas accounted for 2.1 million. The ‘coasters’ are outside the orbital influence of the big city but live on the coast. Metro-rural areas on the fringe of suburbia accounted for 800,000 people. Well beyond the city, people in rural and regional Australia numbered 2.8 million. Some 200,000 people occupied the Outback. The Australian cultural social system is illustrated in Fig. 2.2.

![Fig. 2.1 Phases of the Australian Life Cycle. Source Salt (2006), p. 104](image-url)
Salt (2006: 20) used the phrase ‘terms of endearment’ to capture demographic and lifestyle buzzwords that are incorporated into a social mega-wheel. Descriptors used in the wheel are: SLOBB (Sad Lonely Old Baby Boomers) or CADOP (Clever and Desirable Old People); Frugals; Boomers; Generation X; Generation Y; Seachangers; Treechangers; Downshifters; Portfolio Lifestylers; New teenagers; Adventurers and Ecotravellers; and Rurals. The terms Salt has used are listed in Fig. 2.3. The four core groupings are: Frugals; Boomers; Generation X; and Generation Y.

The topic of generations is a subject of much discussion and humour, particularly among cartoonists who portray Generation Y as unique and unable to be copied by their Boomer parents. According to Salt (2006):

Generation Y has not only eschewed boomer culture and fashion, they are celebrating their time in life. Generation Y teenage girls have evolved a fashion that is quintessentially ‘young’. The midriff is exposed and jeans are lowered to sit squarely – and precariously – on the widest part of the hips. This look cannot be copied by a 50-year-old baby boomer woman. (p. 86)

Unique fashion is equally applicable to Generation Y males. Hairstyles sporting the Mohawk and Spiky cuts are difficult to copy by a balding 50-year-old male.

In early 2010, the population of Australia surpassed 21 million (see Fig. 2.4). The gender split was more or less even, with males exceeding females by approximately 46,000. Based on Salt’s (2006) generational categories, age-band groupings filled in the entire population: Frugals, 70+; Baby Boomers, 45–69; Generation X, 30–44; Generation Y, 15–29; and Generation Z, 0–14. Figure 2.5 illustrates the Australian population by generations.

The groupings of generations may be likened to ‘social regions’, a phrase coined by Goffman (1971). He defined a region ‘as any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers of perception’ (p. 109). Elaborating on social regions, Goffman stated:
when a performance is given it is usually given in a highly bounded region, to which boundaries with respect to time are often added. The impression and understanding fostered by the performance will tend to saturate the region and time span, so that any individual located in this time-space manifold will be in a position to observe the performance and be guided by the definition of the situation which the performance fosters. (p. 109)

Generations qualify as social regions as the performances (behaviours) are configured by the social and economic conditions of their time. Thus, the Frugals who encountered the Great Depression could be configured in behaviour that featured hard economic times. Consequently, jobs were unstable, as a generation they were debt-shy, spent to replace and were ambivalent about fashion. Likewise, the behaviour of the Boomers would tend to saturate the region and the time span. In periods after the Second World War, boomers found themselves in periods of economic growth and full employment. Consequently, they were self-confident, self-centred and self-congratulatory. They acquired high-level jobs and were

Fig. 2.3 Social Mega Wheel: Australia, 2010