

## INTRODUCTION

What is the leisure experience? In the nineteenth century, paid work became a much more systematic and controlled activity – for the vast majority of people, paid work took place in factories, shops and offices that were physically separate from people’s homes. Work also took place at specified times of the day and on specified days of the week. Importantly, the state came to recognise that in the often overcrowded urban environment, leisure was a potential threat to the public order and needed to be closely controlled. Most definitions of leisure take their starting point from this historical change in the nature of the working day. But what is the meaning of the leisure experience? Is it more than a period of time free from work and other obligations? We shall see in the first two chapters that leisure is about the attempt to fulfil pleasure and desire and about the construction of an identity that we feel comfortable with. The search for identity and the ways we choose to fulfil our pleasures and desires can often take on the form of addictions, deviant or criminal behaviour, adopting ways of behaving that may be morally questionable or cause harm to ourselves or others. It is against this ‘dark’ side of leisure motivation that the institutional framework for leisure emerged in the nineteenth century. The concept of rational recreation was used to control pleasure and desire and provide the working class people with a leisure experience that was morally uplifting. How this institutional framework for leisure emerged in the nineteenth century is explained in the early part of the book.

Debates about the need to control drinking and gambling that began in the nineteenth century have continued up to the present century. In addition, debates about access to open space and countryside also began in the nineteenth century and have also continued into the present century. State involvement in leisure can be local, national and international. At all levels, the state attempts to regulate pleasure and desire, whilst at the same time encouraging forms of leisure activity that benefit the community. There are a wide range of social theories and research on regulation, control, participation and constraint. In the early chapters of the book, we place the arguments about leisure participation and constraint into the context of these wider debates about the role of the state in the moral regulation of the population.

The book also addresses the changing nature of work. If we assume that there is a link between the type of work that we do and the type of leisure activities we choose to engage in, then we should expect that if the nature of the work we do changes, then the nature of the leisure we choose to engage

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with should also change. We trace the shift from Fordism to Post Fordism and explain the significance this has had for leisure.

Many of the leisure activities we engage in are highly personal and we engage in them alone. However, much leisure participation is organised and participation takes place within bureaucratic organisations. The leisure sector covers the public, private and voluntary sectors and has to be managed by people who are qualified leisure managers. It is commonly assumed in leisure management texts that a good leisure manager is a person who has a sound grasp of generic but relevant management theory and applies this to the leisure sector. In this book, we evaluate a range of commonly used management theories, not simply in terms of what is the most effective way of applying a given theory to the leisure sector, but we look at the validity and reliability of each theory, looking at the processes of data collection, data analysis, assumptions about employees and customer motivation. A number of management theories have their origin in the nineteenth century and it is possible to see how they relate to the state's desire to regulate the leisure experience, but we examine the suitability of traditional management theories for the management of the leisure experience. A case in point is Scientific Management, which we explore in some detail and show how this theory and body of research developed into a form of McDonaldised emotional or performative labour in the latter years of the twentieth century.

The latter two chapters are concerned with the impact of globalisation on the leisure sector. We explore the nature of globalisation by reference to a range of social, economic and cultural theories. The chapters trace the emergence of the information society/network society, and examine the nature of the War on Terror and the motivations that terrorists have for selecting leisure targets. One of the central challenges facing the leisure manager today is how to manage the leisure experience under the threat of terrorism. The book looks at and evaluates the activities of some of the largest global companies and the products and services they offer for sale. We find that by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, global leisure provision is closely linked to new and more effective forms of consumption.