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Labor and Leisure: Intellectual Traditions

THE MEANING AND PROPER PLACE of labor and leisure, work and contemplation, have drawn the attention of scholars since the time of Greece and Rome. Only since the industrial revolution, however, has the interplay between labor and leisure become a major problem, both social and intellectual. From Adam Smith and Engels to C. Wright Mills, from de Tocqueville to Riesman, speculation about the interaction of work with the rest of life has gone forward.[1]

This article seeks to delineate some themes of social criticism which bear on the labor-leisure problem, to suggest ways in which the diverse traditions of research may be blended in attacking the problem, and to specify some research questions relevant to the fields of both sociology and industrial relations.[2]

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[1] Social trends linked to industrialism account for this: (1) work became a separate system of roles, segregated to some extent from kinship, religious, political, educational, and other institutions; (2) work schedules fluctuated—average hours of work probably mounted with early industrialism then dropped steadily as productivity climbed; leisure, in terms of both the number of hours and the resources of men, money, and organizations devoted to it, recently became more prominent; (3) the newly separate work roles themselves underwent rapid change; (4) the continuity provided by integrated roles and by relatively stable and fixed rights and duties of positions in small functional groups was disrupted, with concomitant shifts in the sources and levels of social integration; (5) units of social organization grew in size and the powers of central authorities expanded; in polity and economy, in morals and law, the small units of guild, clan, village community, and monastery, dominant in Medieval Europe, gave way to state, mass party, and corporation.

[2] My attempts to pursue these questions about the leisure correlates of work situation are described in "Work, Careers, and Social Integration," *International Social Science Journal,* XII (Fall, 1960), 543–560, on which this is based; "Life Cycle, Work Situation, and Participation in Formal Associations," in R. W. Kleemeier, editor, *Aging and Leisure* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 213–242; "Social Structure, Popular Culture, and Mass Behavior," *Studies in Public Communication,* III (Summer, 1961), 15–22; "Orderly Careers and Social Participation: The Impact of Work History on Social Integration in the Middle Mass," *American Sociological Review,* XXVI (August, 1961), 521–539; and "The Uneven Distribution of Leisure: The Impact of Economic Growth on 'Free Time,'" *Social Problems,* IX (Summer, 1961), 32–56—all of which cite the relevant work of others. This material is used by permission of the Free Press of Glencoe and is part of a program of research made possible by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health.

The Social and Intellectual Problems

Of modern writers, perhaps Engels and de Tocqueville have given us our main leads in this area. Both were pessimistic about styles of life they saw emerging in the nineteenth century; both linked these styles of life to economic development. Engels observed what he felt was the demoralization of English textile mill workers. In passages re-echoed by Marxists, liberals, humanitarians, and conservatives alike he wrote:

> Nothing is more terrible than being constrained to do some one thing every day from morning until night against one's will. And the more a man the worker feels himself, the more hateful must his work be to him, because he feels the constraint, the aimlessness of it for himself. Why does he work? For love of work? From a natural impulse? Not at all! He works for money, for a thing which has nothing whatsoever to do with the work itself. . . . The division of labour has multiplied the brutalising influences of forced work. In most branches the worker's activity is reduced to some paltry, purely mechanical manipulation, repeated minute after minute, unchanged year after year.[3]

Here he quotes Adam Smith and other "bourgeois witnesses," as he calls them, and then marks the tendency of workers to seek substitute gratifications in pub and brothel. With sentiments worthy of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, he says:

> On Saturday evenings, especially when wages are paid and work stops somewhat earlier than usual, when the whole working-class pours from its own poor quarters into the main thoroughfares, intemperance may be seen in all its brutality. . . .
>
> Next to intemperance in the enjoyment of intoxicating liquor, one of the principal faults of English working-men is sexual license. But this, too, follows with relentless logic, with inevitable necessity out of the position of a class left to itself, with no means of making fitting use of its freedom . . . the working-men, in order to get something from life, concentrate their whole energy upon these two enjoyments, carry them to excess. . . .
>
> The failings of the workers in general may be traced to an unbridled thirst for pleasure, to want of providence, and of flexibility in fitting into the social order, to the general inability to sacrifice the pleasure of the moment to a remoter advantage.[4]

One recognizes two major hypotheses restated by contemporary observers: the *compensatory leisure* hypothesis—in an up-to-date version the Detroit auto-worker, for eight hours gripped bodily to the main line, doing repetitive, low-skilled, machine-paced work which is wholly ungratifying, comes rushing out of the plant gate, weaves in and out of traffic on the super-

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[3] Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844*, translated by Florence K. Wischnewetsky (London: Allen and Unwin, 1892), pp. 118–119.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 127–129.

highway at 70 miles an hour in a secondhand Cadillac Eldorado, stops off for a beer and starts a barroom brawl, goes home and beats his wife, and in his spare time throws a rock at a Negro moving into the neighborhood. In short, his routine of leisure is an explosive compensation for the deadening rhythms of factory life.

Engels implies an alternative, too—the *"spillover" leisure* hypothesis: another auto-worker goes quietly home, collapses on the couch, eats and drinks alone, belongs to nothing, reads nothing, knows nothing, votes for no one, hangs around the home and the street, watches the "late-late" show, lets the TV programs shade into one another, too tired to lift himself off the couch for the act of selection, too bored to switch the dials. In short, he develops a "spillover" leisure routine in which alienation from work becomes alienation from life; the mental stultification produced by his labor permeates his leisure.

Another set of research leads comes from that remarkably prescient Frenchman, de Tocqueville, who wrote his "Lonely Crowd" in 1840, about a century too early. His *Democracy in America* provides the classic picture of the mass society, a mobile people possessing only shallow roots in the community, their life interests focused in the narrow circle of kin and friend—men who look to the State as Big Brother and believe that tyranny is freedom. Instead of Engels' portrait of a worker who alternates between extreme activism and extreme apathy, we get a picture of family and neighborhood localism, a life without meaningful links to the larger community. Let de Tocqueville speak for himself:

> I seek to trace the novel features under which despotism may appear in the world. The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men, all equal and alike, incessantly endeavoring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest; his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind. . . .
>
> Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate.

There follows an attack on the welfare state, which, he says,

> . . . provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances: what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?[5]

Thus, while Engels complained that men were being condemned to labor (a labor that would brutalize them), de Tocqueville was afraid they might be condemned to leisure in the welfare state (a leisure which would be trivial,

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[5] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Knopf, 1951), II, 318–319.

unchallenging, uncreative, a kind of quiet servitude, lacking in the autonomy and self-reliance proper to man's estate).

Engels tied his observations to a theory of class struggle. De Tocqueville tied his observations to a basic image of the mass society—a picture of dreary uniformity, cross-cutting social classes. Engels thought that continued technological change would make work so meaningless and rewards so meagre, that the working class would revolt. De Tocqueville, more sensitive to the possibility of economic abundance, argued that the piling up of goods and services itself becomes burdensome and meaningless and destroys any sense of the larger communal life.

Class society or mass society, however, both writers were alert to the fact that a man's work routine places a heavy hand on his routine of leisure, that attitudes and practices developed in one sphere of life can spill over into another—"killing time" at work can become "killing time" in leisure, apathy in workplace can become apathy in politics, alienation from the one, alienation from the other.

Many students have subsequently elaborated these classic indictments of the industrial revolution. Contemporary social critics have taken two views of the relation of labor to leisure. Many see an ever-sharper split between the two and condemn the tendency as a source of interpersonal and intrapsychic strain and social instability. Some argue that segmental, and hence weak, attachments to various spheres of private life mean stronger attachments to remote symbols of nation, race, and class, which are expressed in hyperpatriotism, racism, extremist politics, and fear of conspiracy. The root difficulty is assumed to lie in the failure of individuals and groups to integrate their diverse behavior into a coherent pattern—one which promotes and reflects healthy mastery of self and social environment. The resulting quest for role integration within the fragmented person easily becomes the collective quest for moral certainty in the community.

Theorists of political pluralism have also seen separation of the spheres of life—work from leisure, production from consumption, workplace from residence, education from religion, the military from politics, the political party from aristocratic family cliques—as intrinsic to urban-industrial society. But they argue that such segmentation strengthens social stability or a democratic political order or both. Segmental participation in diverse spheres means limited commitment to each. Limited commitment blocks susceptibility to manipulation. Segmental and limited attachments to secondary organizations and the state leave the person free and constrain tendencies to extremist behavior.

In contrast are the social critics who picture a reversal of the trend toward segmentation of life. They argue, for instance, that whatever split between

labor and leisure industrialization brought in the past, modern society moves now toward a fusion of the two: work, it is said, is becoming more like play, and play more like work. At work the long coffee break among white-collar girls, the lunch "hour" among top business and professional people, card games among night shift employees; off work the do-it-yourself movement for millions, spare-time jobs for at least one in eighteen, "customers' golf" for sales executives, commuter-train conferences for account executives—these are adduced in evidence of a blurring of the nineteenth-century gap between work and non-work. Moreover, many argue that this fusion of labor and leisure represents a threat to the highest function of culture—pure play, uncontaminated by necessity or utility, unbound by moral duty or external compulsion, unburdened by anxiety. Both at work and off work, it is said, this tendency leads to a decline in creative autonomy, a general sense of oppression, and an increase in the anxious effort to conform.

In either case—sharp split or strong fusion—speculation about the changing work situation is usually accompanied by comment about the quality of social participation, media exposure, and consumption in the community; a concern with dehumanized labor becomes a concern with leisure-time malaise.[6]

Partly because of the vagueness of this century-long debate, but mainly because systematic research in this area has barely begun and even descriptive information is lacking, the issues remain obscure.

It is apparent that these themes of social criticism center on the major theoretical concerns of sociology—the attributes of social structure and their connections, how one or another structural form emerges, persists, changes, how structure facilitates or hampers the efforts of men variously located to realize their strivings. More specifically, how does role differentiation arising in the economic order affect role differentiation in the community and society, i.e., how do diverse institutional orders (economic, political-military, kinship, religious, educational-aesthetic) maintain their autonomy and yet link up? What changes in work and leisure can be linked to changes in the class structure of the urban community? How do these changes affect the integration of industrial society—the extent to which persons share common stable meanings (values, norms, beliefs) which define the various roles they play?

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[6] Solutions to the problem of stultifying labor seem to fall into three categories: (1) develop patterns of creative, challenging leisure to compensate for an inevitable spread in dehumanized labor; (2) offer better compensation to those condemned to alienating work situations (e.g., the trade union solution of more money for less working-time); (3) redesign the workplace and technology to invest work with more meaning and hence enhance the quality of leisure. David Riesman in the course of his seminal writings of the past decade has advocated all three strategies and has become discouraged by each in turn. See the stimulating analysis by Georges Friedmann, *Où va le travail humain?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).

Blending the Relevant Traditions of Research

A rich store of ideas and data is provided by four groups of researchers in social science: students of (1) occupations and complex industrial organizations, (2) industrial relations and labor markets, (3) stratification (especially those who speak of stratification in the "mass society"), and (4) family life and leisure. My aim here is to state briefly what each group of specialists can learn from the other as they seek to describe and explain variations in the sources and levels of social integration. I will also suggest some research questions and hypotheses which relate these areas more directly to general sociology.

Specialists in the sociology of work and industrial relations have the close familiarity with technology and task which students of stratification and leisure too often lack. It is no news that in handling occupational data we are still captives of the Census occupational classification. Nor is anyone unaware that the categories encompass vast variations in rights and duties on and off the job. For example, in the American Census "Professional, Technical and Kindred" covers authors and draftsmen, strip-tease artists, and mechanical engineers; "Managers, Officials and Proprietors" embraces the credit man and the political appointee at the board of elections, the entrepreneur of the hot-dog stand and the big business executive; "Clerical and Kindred" covers bank teller and mail carrier, while "Sales Workers" lumps together newsboy and ad man, big-ticket salesman, and the lady at the notions counter.[7] Yet most sociologists pay little attention to the vast differences in the organization of work and the nature of work experience contained in such categories.[8]

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[7] Standard sources of occupational information—the Census Occupational and Industrial Classification, the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles,* and vocational guidance literature—typically give a better account of "skill," training, and physical task than of any of the following sociological variables: relations with clients, customers, or colleagues; off-work, career-determined obligations and hence hours of labor; administrative and financial duties of nonadministrative personnel; personnel work of those not defined as personnel workers; the manager's relations to his bosses; the internal and external intelligence functions served by a variety of specialists; quasi-legal activities; degree of discipline or freedom. Even homogeneous occupational groups in one type of organization display vastly varied work routines. See, for example, the excellent account of the controller's position in large multi-plant companies (e.g., "keeping score," "attention-directing," "problem-solving," and the varied work relations implied) in H. A. Simon and others, *Centralization and Decentralization in Organizing the Controller's Department* (New York: Controllers Institute, 1954). See the varied jobs and functions of labor's staff experts, described in H. L. Wilensky, *Intellectuals in Labor Unions: Organizational Pressures on Professional Roles* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956), parts II and IV.

[8] It is a tribute to sociological zeal that some students have begun to classify occupations in other terms. See, for instance, D. Miller and G. E. Swanson, *The Changing American Parent* (New York: Wiley, 1958); A. J. Reiss, Jr., "Occupational Mobility of Professional Workers," *American Sociological Review*, XX (December, 1955), 699; C. Kerr and A. Siegel, "The Interindustry Propensity to Strike—An International Comparison," in A. Kornhauser, R. Dubin, and A. M. Ross, editors, *Industrial Conflict* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), pp. 189–212; P. K. Hatt, "Occupation and Social Stratification," *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (May, 1950), 539. It is time to go beyond these forays and launch a major assault against received labels, even in

Much suggestive material is already on hand. Mayo, Hughes, and their students for three decades have dealt with the problem of social control in and of occupational groups, describing the rules that govern the person's entry into the world of work, his movement through it, and the sanctions that routinely keep him in line.[9] Students of complex organizations have also given us good descriptions of work conduct, especially that of professional and executive people.[10] This literature parallels the effort of traditional students of labor from Ely, the Webbs, Hoxie, and Commons to Slichter, Seidman, and Kerr.[11] These men, trying to describe the sources and effects of labor discontent and to explain variations in labor movements and collective bargaining, come to a firm appreciation of the importance of even minor variations in technology and task. Their patient immersion in the details of wage structures, of systems of incentives, merit rating, and job evaluation (rationalization of wage rates in terms of job content), their study of the grievances centered on changes in workload and job assignment, their grasp of the issues that arise in the day-to-day administration of a labor contract —these provide an invaluable supplement to the sociological description of men at work.

From both the sociology of work and industrial relations we can derive some notion of structural uniformities in the organization of work in industrial societies. We can learn that all such societies make and enforce rules on the recruitment and training of employees, division of work, time of work, pace, quantity and quality of work, method and amount of reward, move-

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mass surveys, and work out a set of categories that have more relevance to an understanding of both social class and occupational groups.

[9] See E. Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); W. Whyte, *Money and Motivation* (New York: Harper, 1955); E. C. Hughes, *Men and Their Work* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958); and the brilliant essays of Erving Goffman.

[10] See the literature cited in R. K. Merton and others, editors, *Reader in Bureaucracy* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1952); R. Dubin, *The World of Work* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1958); Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Reflections on Business," *American Journal of Sociology*, LV (July, 1959), 1–31; and A. Etzioni, editor, *Complex Organizations* (New York: Holt, Rinehard, and Winston, 1961). See also such little-noticed, play-by-play descriptions of administrative life as V. Thompson, *The Regulatory Process in OPA Gas Rationing* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), and S. K. Bailey, *Congress Makes a Law: The Story Behind the Employment Act* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950).

[11] Representative works include: R. T. Ely, *The Labor Movement in America* (New York: Crowell, 1905); S. and B. Webb, *Industrial Democracy* (London: Longmans, Green, 1920); R. F. Hoxie, *Trade Unionism in the United States* (New York and London: D. Appleton, 1917); J. R. Commons, "American Shoemakers, 1648–1895, A Sketch of Industrial Revolution," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XXIV (November, 1909), 39–98; and *A Documentary History of American Industrial Society* (11 vols.; Cleveland, Ohio: A. H. Clark, 1910–1911); S. H. Slichter, *Union Policies and Industrial Management* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1941); J. Seidman, *The Needle Trades* (New York and Toronto: Farrar and Rinehart, 1942); J. Seidman, J. London, B. Karsh, and D. Tagliacozzo, *The Worker Views His Union* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); and the literature cited in E. W. Bakke and C. Kerr, *Unions, Management and the Public* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948). See H. L. Wilensky, *Industrial Relations: A Guide to Reading and Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954) for a review of this literature.

ment between work positions, permissible expressions of discontent, ways of dealing with individual insecurity—in short, rules which define social relations at work, specifying a network of reciprocal obligations and rights.[12] We also learn that these structural uniformities are accompanied by momentous cultural differences.[13]

This literature can make us aware of differences and similarities in work situation and career among populations at the same social-economic level, in various times and places. If we then link work-situation variables to patterns of social participation, consumption, and other leisure activities, and to related values and beliefs, we can illuminate a central issue in the analysis of urban-industrial societies: under what conditions and in what groups and strata do homogeneous *class cultures* (sustained by similar levels of income and education and common absorption of the mass media) or homogeneous *ethnic-religious cultures* (sustained by common descent and early socialization) or *community cultures* (reflecting the size, density, and turnover of population, dominant form of dwelling unit, relation to central city) shape social conduct more than *occupational cultures* (rooted in common tasks, work schedules, job training, and career patterns)? Such research questions as these are implied: independent of "class," ethnic-religious training, and neighborhood, how do various types of tasks, schedules, and work milieu affect the opportunity to develop social ties of varying strength and type? How do they affect the experience of the person—his attachment to or alien-

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[12] For evidence that the labor contract captures what is universal in the organization of work, see any standard codification of contract clauses, for example, *Prentice-Hall Labor Course, 1955* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1954), chap. 12.

[13] For instance, the creation of an industrial labor force everywhere brings forth labor protest. But such protest takes many different forms: absenteeism, loafing, passive or active insubordination, sabotage, strikes, political protest movements. As industrialization proceeds, various people contend for control over this labor protest, for the right to channel it and direct it: employers, union leaders, politicians, government administrators, religious leaders, military cliques. See C. Kerr and others, "The Labour Problem in Economic Development: A Framework for a Reappraisal," *International Labour Review*, LXXI (March, 1955), 223–235. And protest is channeled in wondrously varied directions: a combinaion of trade unions and labor parties in Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries; revolutionary syndicalist, Catholic, or Communist organizations in France and Italy; state-managed "labor fronts" in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union; paternalistic company unions or government "captives" in Nehru's India; business unions in the U.S. (with a minor strain of labor racketeering which is strictly an American product). See Walter Galenson, editor, *Comparative Labor Movements* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952); Franz L. Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942); C. A. Myers, *Labor Problems in the Industrialization of India* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958). The point is general. In dealing with kinship or politics, too, we must match the structural universal with the cultural particular: advancing industrialism may well be incompatible with the extended family system; the nuclear family comes to the fore, the welfare state expands. But industrialism cannot explain differences in child-training between German and American fathers; the accent on private vs. public welfare services in the United States; the greater equalitarian tendencies of American culture as compared with that of Britain, or Britain's stronger tradition of civil liberties. In short, many of the most important variations we have seen over the past 50 to 100 years demand that we take account of values and beliefs as well as technology and social structure. For elaboration see H. L. Wilensky, *Industrial Society and Social Welfare* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1958).

ation from work? Does alienation from work become alienation from life or are unpleasant compartments typically segregated and quarantined? What major variations in job patterns do modern economies provide? How do these affect the ways in which persons and groups relate to the major institutions of the society?

A second way in which these diverse traditions might profitably be blended is in relating small units to their larger social contexts. Students in industrial relations and stratification, when they deal with the person in a work role, seldom fail to consider the corporate groups, industries, communities, societies, and strata within which persons and roles are embedded; the sociology of work often neglects these larger units. Much of the complaint about the "human relations in industry" movement is more than ideological, a mere rejection of its value premises—its love of order, harmony, efficiency, and hierarchy as against the values of equality and freedom of association. There is also the uneasy sociological feeling that the units it deals with (principally work roles and work groups) will never be put together in some larger frame, and hence no real contribution to the general effort to see societies as functioning wholes will be forthcoming. Whatever the merit of this criticism, the sociology of work, with its vignettes of occupational subcultures—the allegedly separate worlds of the junkman and jazzman, doctor and professor, waitress and machinist, school superintendent and city manager —could bear closer articulation with the general area of stratification, with its glimpses of the big picture. Here again, we need to tease out the unique impact of occupational role systems and not mistake class culture for occupational culture.[14]

Finally, we need to blend a knowledge of economic institutions with an awareness of the flow of time. Writers in the sociology of work, industrial relations, and stratification maintain a sensitivity to the economic order which

[14] On their side, students of stratification who handle larger social units under such labels as "mass society," "urban-industrial society," "urbanism," and who look at selected technological environments should not mistake either the alienation or the cheerful idiocy they see for the general fate. See the writings of C. W. Mills, D. Riesman, D. Bell, and their predecessors from Engels to Veblen and Mannheim. The "brutalization" of Engels' textile workers, the "functional rationality" of Mannheim's bureaucrats, the managerial mentality of Veblen's engineers—these are said to be rooted in work routines necessitated by modern technology and social organization. Mannheim's formulation is typical: an increase in the "functional rationality" characterizing bureaucracy has not brought an increase in "substantial rationality." In fact, "A few people can see things more and more clearly over an ever-widening field, while the average man's capacity for rational judgment steadily declines once he has turned over to the organizer the responsibility for making decisions." K. Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, translated by E. A. Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940), pp. 51 ff., 81–105, 350 ff. Although I am inclined to share Mannheim's pessimism, it is possible that modern economies demand that an *increasing* proportion of the population develop the conceptual and social skills (including some intellectual mastery of the social system) that we would label "substantive rationality" and that the totalitarian-mass potential lies in other aspects of social organization. Only patient attention to the changing structure of work situations and the incidence of the variations we find will permit us to assess these ideas.

students of family life and leisure often lose. Most of the studies of leisure concentrate on the residential community or some recreational activity within it (card-games, jazz, gardening, neighboring, TV-viewing, parties, etc.) and thereby lose sight of the influence of economic system and workplace on leisure routine. The job of the sociologist, again, is not merely to describe roles (worker, husband, guest) or explain variations in interpersonal relations in little grouplets (work crew, family, party), but to see the connections between them and thereby construct a more complete picture of what other disciplines view as a residual "social context" or "social environment."

On the other hand, students of leisure and family life are usually alive to the flow of time—life cycle for the person, a changing kinship system for the society—which sometimes escapes students in the other areas. A man's current job, his immediate work situation, place of residence, even his class position, while they count for something, tend to be ephemeral. This is true even if one's time perspective stretches only two or three generations. Yet I know of no systematic studies which focus on the interdependence of behavior and attitude in the separate spheres of modern society over the life span of the person—on interlocking cycles of work, family life and consumption, and community participation.

To illustrate the possibilities, there are literally scores of American studies of job satisfaction whose contradictory results could well be re-examined from this point of view. They yield a picture of lifetime variation very similar to that derived from studies of aging and social participation—a low period in the twenties, a climb to a peak in the middle years, a slight drop-off, and then a final sag in the sixties. I would suggest this interpretation: job satisfaction is a function of disparity between rewards (what we get in income and job status) and aspirations or expectations (what we want in goods and services and job status); both payment and demand are likely to show a chronology linked to family life cycle and work history. Leaving aside the college crowd and the unusually ambitious, the young man fresh from high school, for a few years at least, finds himself with a happy combination of modest aspirations, limited responsibilities, and an income that seems large.

A sharp change occurs, however, when attention turns to home and children. As family pressures mount, the demand for credit in the product market and income in the labor market begins to rise quickly. The appetite for consumer durable goods and the demand for money and job security reach a peak in the thirties among married men with children. But the peak in actual income and security seldom comes during this critical period. A working wife is one solution, but the double-earner pattern is least frequent among the very families which feel squeezed—young couples with children at home. The result: a morale trough which lasts until job aspirations and

family pressures decline, rewards increase, or both. When children leave home and debts are paid off, job morale, indeed all satisfactions unconnected with child-rearing, should climb. Later, with retirement impending, the morale curve will vary, depending upon type of career and strength of work commitment, but a final dip in morale seems most frequent. Apparently, the United States (perhaps every industrial society) has so structured the timing and balance of obligations in the economic, kinship, and other spheres that peak demands in economic life (launching a career, getting established in a job) coincide with peak demands in procreation and hence consumption—doubtless a source of strain for both person and social structure.

As they combine an understanding of the economic order and social context with a knowledge of variations in technology, task, and career, students in all these specialisms could profit from a longer time perspective. For instance, an assumption underlying much discussion of the affluent society is that economic growth brings a heavy drop in the propensity to work. This idea rests on time series for various societies and industries which show that increased productivity is negatively correlated with hours of work; and cross-sectional studies by economists of earnings and hours, which again show a strong negative correlation. Orthodox economic theory distinguishes two effects of an increase in hourly earnings: an *income effect* (people can afford to buy more leisure) and a *substitution effect* (leisure costs more in foregone income). But the theory does not say which will predominate; we have only the empirical findings coupled with assumptions about the taste for leisure or leisure as a "superior good." Sociological explanations of such data emphasize the impact of high and rising income on leisure styles: increased preoccupation with consumption, more stable family life, the diffusion of middle-class, suburban participation patterns—a general withdrawal from work and an intensified search for substitute leisure commitments, with accompanying changes in social stratification and political life.

As I have shown elsewhere,[15] the average man's gain in leisure has been exaggerated by selective comparison of gross daily or weekly averages with those of the "take off" period of rapid economic growth in England, France, and America—a time of horrendous working schedules and conditions. Estimates of annual and lifetime leisure and comparisons with earlier times suggest a different picture. The skilled urban worker has now achieved the position of his thirteenth-century counterpart. Upper strata have in fact lost out. Even though their worklives are shorter and vacations longer than those of lower strata, these men work many hours, week after week—sometimes reaching a truly startling lifetime total.

[15] Wilensky, "The Uneven Distribution of Leisure. . . ."

Are long-hours groups in the vanguard or rearguard? Beyond the welfare state will we find the society of slackers or of eager beavers? The choice of income over leisure may involve working extra hours on the main job, obtaining a secondary job, or putting your wife to work. Considering both moonlighting and all hours worked on the main job, our data suggest that (1) there is a slowly growing minority of the male urban labor force in the United States who usually work 55 hours a week or more (at least a third of the lawyers, professors, small proprietors, and middle managers in our samples work that long); (2) the new leisure class is no class at all but a collection of occupational groups and age categories whose members have motivation and opportunity to choose leisure over income (college-educated engineers, middle-aged skilled workers) *or* are marginal to the economy and are therefore forced into leisure (the unemployed, the involuntarily retired).

There are doubtless large differences in the propensity to work among societies at various levels of economic development. But before we assume that continued economic growth produces the leisure-oriented or consumer-oriented society, we must have more analysis of variations in hours of work among the rich nations themselves and among occupational groups within them. The Soviet Union may be a good case for both types of comparisons. Its lower level and higher rate of growth, together with its planning, puritanical spirit, and economic policies (expressed in a short standard workday and exhortation to spend time off work productively) may give that nation more of an edge in moonlighting than in rocket thrust. As for the elites of the modern world, it seems likely that they will continue to exercise the privilege they have always had—the right to choose work as well as leisure. The Kennedys and Khrushchevs will continue to make work for one another; history may show the complacent leisure of an Eisenhower to be an aberration.

Conclusion

I believe that here, in the labor-leisure problem, in the study of the links between economic order and life style, with attention to change within the biography of persons and the history of structures, lie some of the most fascinating clues to the shape of modern society. It is an area where concern with recurrent social problems—freedom and order, work alienation and leisure-time malaise—meshes neatly with continuing theoretical concerns of sociology and economics. Both social critics and social scientists would gain in analytical power if they would blend traditions of theory and research from the sociology of work, industrial relations, stratification, and family research, focus their attention on routines of labor that play out in leisure style, and gather data pinpointing the ties that bind men to the Great Society.