

Social Participation and Family Welfare: The Money and Time Costs of Leisure

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**SOCIAL PARTICIPATION
AND FAMILY WELFARE
THE MONEY AND TIME
COST OF LEISURE**

by Michael Bittman

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Tony Eardley
Editor

Abstract

The concept of social exclusion has become the central organising concept in social policy research, especially in Europe. The term 'social exclusion' has displaced many of the terms formerly in use, such as 'inequality', 'deprivation' and 'poverty'. Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional concept embracing economic, social and political deprivations, that alerts us to the significance of social identity, culture, agency and, ultimately, power relations. In contrast to some earlier research traditions, the perspective of social exclusion draws our attention to how people can be 'shut out of society' by their inability to participate in customary leisure activities. The ability to participate in leisure is the product of both access to leisure goods and services, and a sufficient quantity of leisure time. An analysis of the most recent Household Expenditure Survey shows that the consumption of leisure goods and services is powerfully determined by income. Consequently, low income can lead to exclusion from leisure participation. However, analysis of the most recent Time Use Survey shows that access to time for leisure participation is most powerfully determined by hours of employment, family responsibilities and gender. After controlling for working hours, household income has no significant effect on available leisure time. A leisure-time poverty line, based on half-median leisure time, is used to show which groups are most excluded from leisure by time constraints. The paper considers a range of policies to alleviate social exclusion from leisure participation.

1 Leisure and Social Participation

Participation and Exclusion

For the last few decades the alternatives of either social participation or social exclusion have dominated the discussion of welfare, particularly in Europe. What worries people about persistently high rates of unemployment, for example, is not just that the unemployed may be poor but that they are likely to be socially excluded. Indeed discussion of 'poverty', in the industrialised countries of Western Europe has been largely supplanted by discussion of social exclusion. A concern with 'exclusion' from the benefits of citizenship in the welfare state lies at the heart of much of literature about social policy. In the European capitals of administration, economic planning and labour advocacy, in Brussels, Paris and Geneva, the presses pump out weighty volumes of research on social exclusion (see European Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion, 1993; Scherer, Hennessy and Pearson, 1998; Rodgers, Gore and Figueiredo, 1995; Silver, 1994; Silver and Wilkinson, 1995). In the UK, the Blair Government has even set up a cross-departmental Social Exclusion Unit to address this social evil (Mandelson, 1997).

The Frenchman René Lenoir is generally credited with having coined the term in 1974 (de Haan, 1998). He used the term to describe the ten per cent of the French population then excluded from employment-based, social security systems. In Lenoir's day the excluded population included the disabled, suicidal people, the aged, abused children, substance abusers and so on. Since that time the term has been extended to cover the unemployed, migrants and minorities in France. In Britain, there has been a clear continuity between the tradition of studying relative deprivation, poverty and social exclusion. Townsend's famous relative deprivation scale is easily thought of as measuring how poverty leads to social exclusion. People were poor, in Townsend's words:

... when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so

seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities. (Townsend, 1979: 31)

The opposite of social exclusion is social participation, or integration in the activities customary in that society (de Haan, 1998: 12). As Atkinson (1990) points out, social exclusion is a relative concept and 'we cannot judge whether or not a person is socially excluded by looking at his or her circumstances in isolation ... People are excluded from a particular society: it refers to a particular place and time' (1998: 7).

Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional concept embracing economic, social and political deprivations (de Haan, 1998: 12-13). Exclusion from the labour market is only 'one face of social exclusion ... people may face exclusion in other parts of their lives, notably in the domain of consumption' (Atkinson, 1998: 13). An analysis based on the concept of social seclusion goes beyond resource allocation and includes social identity, culture, agency and, ultimately, power relations.

The concept of social exclusion emphasises agency and process. Social exclusion is an act, something that one social grouping does to another. The act of exclusion is often mediated by a particular set of institutional arrangements, which hides consequences of exclusionary social actions from many of the participants in the process.

Moreover, analyses based on the idea of social exclusion have usually referred to damaged prospects in the future, and provide insight into the process that transforms temporary disadvantage into permanent disadvantage. Work in this tradition has characteristically concentrated on dynamics. 'People are excluded', says Atkinson, 'not just because they are currently without a job but because they [and their children] have little prospect for the future' (1998: 8). In this respect the concept of social exclusion comes close to the concept of vulnerability. Vulnerability is seen by some as that aspect of poverty that results in 'insecurity, defencelessness, and exposure to risks and shock' (de Haan, 1998: 15).

Two immediate consequences flow from adopting the social exclusion framework: the first is a redefinition of the boundary between luxuries and necessities (in socially relative terms) and the second is some consideration of the long-term or life course effects of social exclusion. Let us examine each of these topics in more detail.

The Concept of Leisure Needs

Let us turn first to a consideration of the distinction between luxury and need. For much of this century it has been customary to regard leisure expenditure as unnecessary expenditure. This is partly because the tradition in studies of poverty has been to set such an austere standard that no one could challenge the standard as being too high. Rowntree's pioneering study of poverty in York, late last century, specifically excluded leisure. In an effort to show that his budget was an irreducible minimum, Rowntree pointed out that:

A family living upon the scale allowed for in this estimate must never spend a penny on railway fare or omnibus. They must never go into the country unless they walk. They must never purchase a halfpenny newspaper or spend a penny to buy a ticket for a popular concert. They must write no letters to absent children, for they cannot afford to pay the postage. They must never contribute anything to their church or chapel, or give any help to a neighbour which costs them money. They cannot save, nor can they join a sick club or trade union, because they cannot pay the necessary subscriptions. The children must have no pocket money for dolls, marbles, or sweets. The father must smoke no tobacco nor drink beer. The mother must never buy pretty clothes for herself or her children, the character of the family wardrobe, as for the family diet, being governed by the regulation: 'Nothing must be bought but that which is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of physical health, and what is bought must be the plainest and most economical description'. Should a

child fall ill, it must be attended by the parish doctor; should it die, it must be buried by the parish. Finally the wage earner must never be absent from his work for one day. (Rowntree, 1901: 133-4).

Similarly, the 'Basic Needs Budget' devised in 1993 by Renwick and Bergmann, which the authors see as extending the narrow approach of the current official US poverty benchmark, covers seven areas of expenditure: food, housing, health care, transportation, clothing, care and personal care/miscellaneous.¹ Renwick and Bergmann note that the official standard includes allowances for 'reading materials, recreational expenses, educational costs, alcoholic beverages, and miscellaneous expenses ... [t]he Basic Needs Budget has no allowances for any of these items' (Renwick and Bergmann, 1993: 10).

However, if social inclusion (participation) is to be encouraged and social exclusion avoided, then people must achieve a particular standard of living, relative to prevailing conditions in that community. Moreover, the concept of social exclusion, as we have seen, covers all relevant activities which affect participation, pays special attention to effects on prospects (especially of children) and draws our attention to the capacity of others to limit one's own capability to alter these circumstances. If the community standard is that people have access to leisure activities, then it follows from the social exclusion framework that people need recreation or leisure.

Recently, the Social Policy Research Centre developed a set of indicative budget standards for Australia. Developing a budget standard involves describing a basket of goods (a pattern of consumption expenditure) that would ensure a particular standard of living, and estimating the cost of that basket at current market prices. In addressing this task the Social Policy Research Centre relied on two methods of gauging community standards. The first method involved conducting a series of specially convened focus groups in urban, regional and rural communities. The second method was to rely upon the rule of thumb that if more than 50 per cent of Australians consumed the item in question then it formed part

1 Renwick and Bergmann had as their chief target the budget standard devised and maintained by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

of the moderate (or 'modest but adequate') standard of living, and if more than 75 per cent of Australians consumed the item, it should be part of even a frugal (or 'low cost') standard (Saunders et al., 1998: 66-73). Using the 50/75 rule is supported by long tradition of study into the social standards of deprivation (Mack and Lansley, 1985).

Focus group responses were typically based on social exclusion criteria, and supported the idea that for the promotion of self-esteem, and to avoid damaging the prospects of children, the ability to sustain some personal care and leisure consumption was significant (Saunders et al., 1998: 523-72). Practically everyone in these groups thought television was a basic item. It was often suggested that owning a television was a means of saving the costs of more expensive out-of-home entertainment. Some access to the news via newspapers and support for hobby activities through magazines was considered important. Participants in all focus groups believed that the ability to purchase alcohol was a social necessity: even the income-constrained sole parents were reluctant to suggest that one could manage without alcohol. Consumption of alcohol was explicitly linked to the capacity to participate in a community form of social life. A regular hair cut, every six to eight weeks, was considered a basic entitlement and having to do without this damaged people's self-esteem.

Most focus group participants thought a childhood without toys was a deprived childhood. Some even argued for the necessity of a home computer, so that children would not be educationally disadvantaged. Participants felt that ownership of private cars was most easily justified on the basis of parenthood. Australian parents need a car, respondents argued, if their children were not to be excluded from participating in key community activities: sport, 'sleeping over' with friends, children's parties, etc.

Furthermore, the focus groups and Atkinson (1988) follow the same logic in seeing the telephone as symbolic of the issue of social exclusion. The responses below are typical of those given by focus group participants.

It is an anchor to the outside. (female, above work force age)

Children need to be able to phone in if they stay. You are by law expected to know where your kids are.
(female, sole parent)

‘A person unable to afford a telephone finds it difficult to participate in a society where the majority have telephones’ says Atkinson (1998:14).

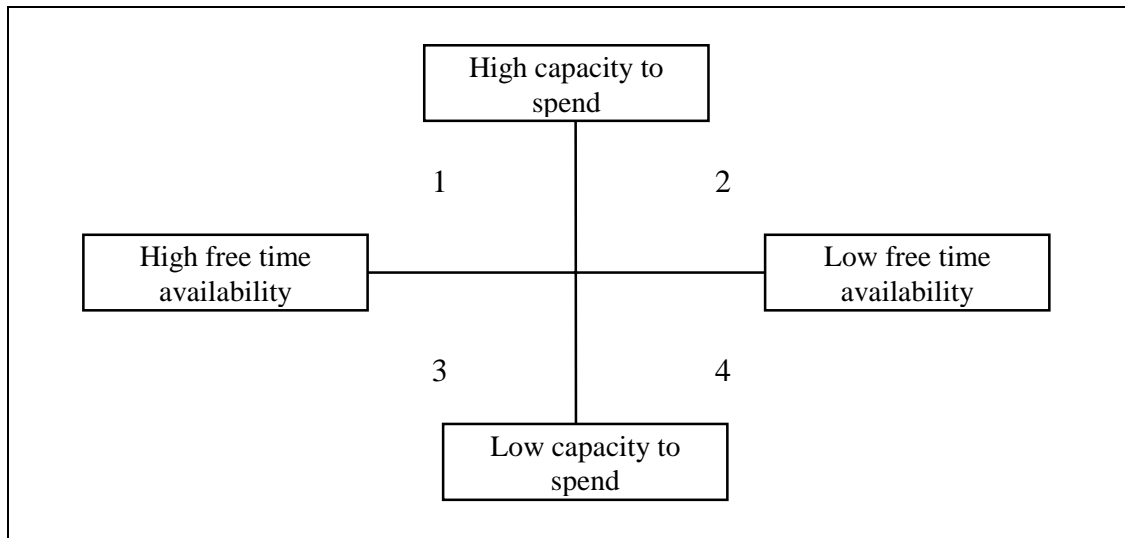
Children are not invited out to play, because neighbours no longer call round – they call up. Letters do not allow the same contact to be kept with relatives who have moved away. A person applying for a job may not be called for an interview since he or she cannot be contacted directly. (Atkinson, 1998: 14)

2 Leisure: The Product of Time and Money

Leisure is a peculiar thing. It is not itself a commodity, although, as we have seen, participation in leisure activities may require the consumption of commodities. Leisure also requires time. Indeed, the very definition of leisure is based on time. In popular discourse, leisure is conceived as time at one’s own disposal. The concept of leisure is usually defined by contrast with constrained activities. In labour economics, leisure is treated as the opposite of paid work. Leisure is often thought of as a residual. It is the ‘free’ time that remains after maintaining one’s body in a healthy and socially acceptable state, contracting time to the market, and meeting domestic and family responsibilities. From the standpoint of social exclusion one can be ‘shut out of leisure’ by a lack of money or a lack of time.² This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Those who are comparatively rich in both time and money, for example wealthy retirees, would fall into Quadrant 1 in Figure 1. For many this represents the pinnacle of social advancement: a society that affords its members both financial resources and the time to enjoy them.

2 Gary Becker (1965) has argued that all consumption requires time and the Swedish economist Staffan Linder (1970) simultaneously proposed a theory that the most economically advanced society would progressively suffer from a paucity of leisure time.

Figure 1: Distribution of Leisure Opportunities

Highly paid but overworked executives might be examples of that category of people in Quadrant 2, that is, people who are relatively money rich but time poor. There are some industrial campaigns around the globe seeking to prevent working hours from putting any employee in this situation (Campbell, 1997; Buchanan and Bearfield, 1997).

The unemployed are typically those that fall into Quadrant 3, combining a low capacity to spend on leisure with an extraordinary quantity of 'free time' available to them. Combating social exclusion implies guaranteeing people in this situation sufficient income to permit enough leisure to satisfy the criterion of social participation.

Those with a low amount of free time available to commit to leisure and who have little capacity to spend on leisure goods and services (Quadrant 4 in Figure 1) are doubly excluded. Single parents fall into this doubly disadvantaged category. A budget standard aimed at avoiding the possibility of social exclusion would need to support not only leisure consumption but also some measures to create more time for leisure, for example by offering carer's relief.

Distribution of Leisure Consumption by Income

As with all expenditure, there is a powerful relationship between income and leisure expenditure. By analysing the broad category of leisure expenditure in the 1993-94 Household Expenditure Survey (ABS, 1996),

we can study both the strength of this relationship and the factors that affect it. In raw terms household leisure³ expenditure increases by \$13 per week for each \$100 dollars of extra (equivalent⁴) disposable household income. A household on a median income, in the sense used here, spent \$45.09 per week on leisure in 1993-94.

The relationship between equivalent income and leisure expenditure is shown in Figure 2. In this figure, equivalent household disposable income has been arranged from lowest to highest in deciles (bands of ten per cent). Apart from the lowest (first) decile, the expenditure on leisure rises consistently with increasing income. The aberrant leisure expenditure of the first decile may result from the low and fluctuating reported incomes of the self-employed.

The association between income and leisure expenditure remains powerfully significant even after controlling for life course stage and employment. The multiple regression analysis in Appendix One explores the effect of income and these other variables on leisure expenditure. Most of the major influences on leisure expenditure, independent of income, are the result of life course transitions. These are summarised in Figure 3.

At the time of the most recent expenditure survey (1993-94), households without children (where the reference person is below the age of 60) spent \$57.55 per week on leisure goods and services when income is held constant at the median. The presence of pre-school age children reduces household leisure expenditure by 29 per cent, even when income and employment hours are held constant. Having a youngest child between five and 12 years of age has no significant effect on leisure expenditure,

3 The expenditure classified as leisure in Household Expenditure Survey includes leisure equipment (televisions, recorders, cameras, racquets, tents, boats, etc.); leisure equipment repairs; newspapers, magazines and books; membership of recreational organisations, entrances fee to national parks, zoos, cultural and sporting events; holidays, including accommodation; gambling; and expenses associated with pets.

4 Equivalent income adjusts household income by taking account of the number of residents in that household. This paper follows the conventional procedure of dividing household income by the square root of the number of residents in order to determine equivalent income.

Figure 2: Leisure Expenditure by Income

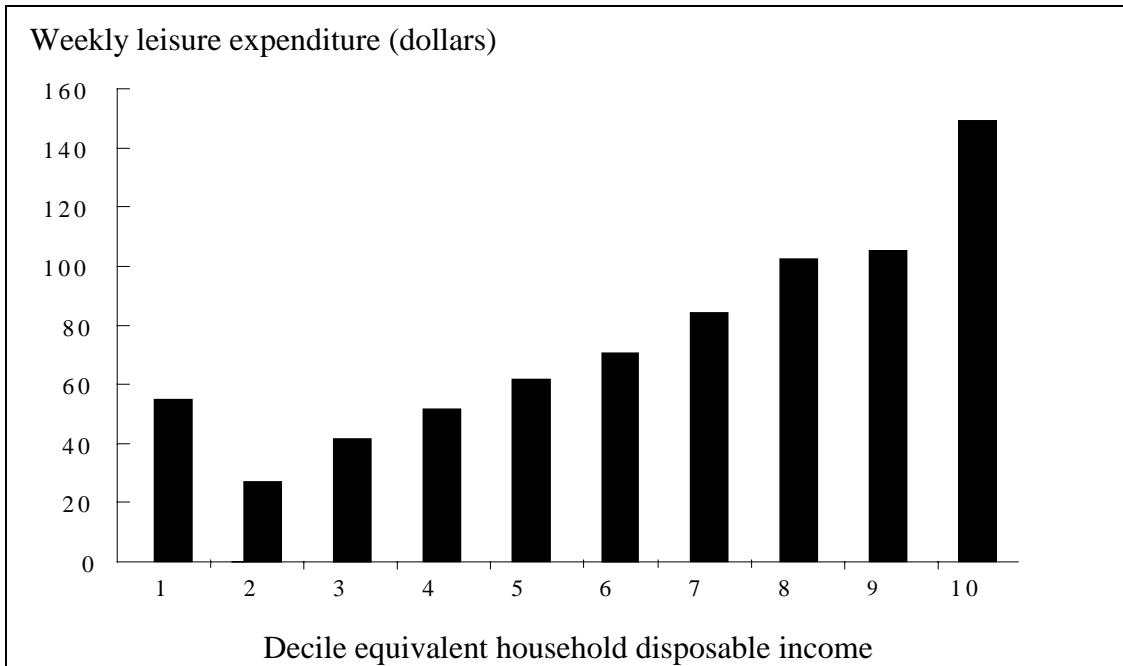
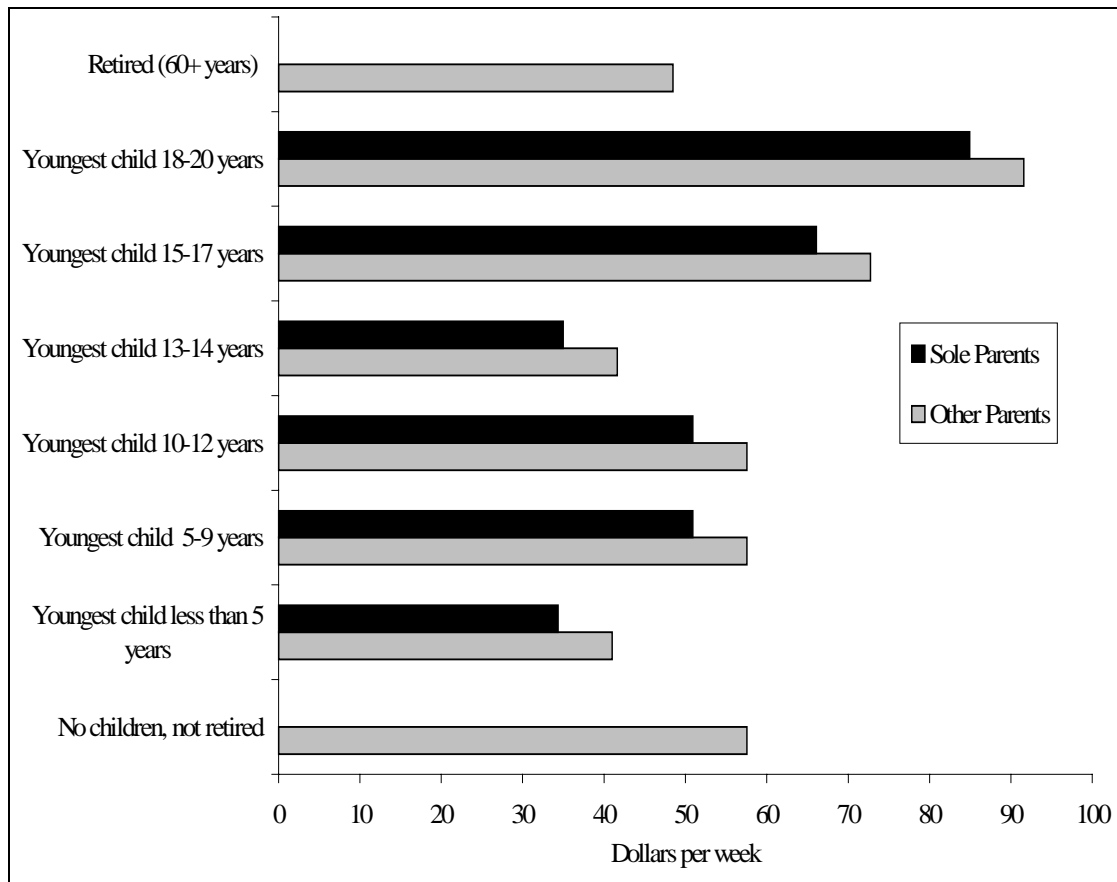


Figure 3: Leisure Expenditure by Life Course Stage (at median equivalent household disposable income)



and this remains at the same level as households without children. When the youngest child is 13 or 14 there is an unexpected contraction of household leisure expenditure by 28 per cent. Children in their middle teens and young adults dramatically increase household expenditure on leisure activities above the level of households without children, by 26 per cent and 59 per cent respectively. Sole parent households spend 12 per cent less on weekly leisure activities when the age of children is held constant. Households where the reference person is approaching age of retirement also spend less on leisure (-16 per cent).

Surprisingly, independent of income and life course stage, hours of employment (for the reference person) have no measurable influence on household leisure expenditure. The presence of an employed spouse does make a significant difference, adding \$7.76 to weekly household leisure expenditure. The idea that a spouse's employment status affects patterns of consumption has been documented by Phipps and Burton (1992) and has been the basis of much of the discussion in the literature about marital bargaining (Lundberg and Pollak, 1996).

Reviewing these findings it seems reasonable to conclude that the major element leading to social exclusion from participation in leisure consumption is disposable income. The influence of employment and life course stages on the consumption of leisure goods and services, independent of income, is comparatively minor. Money is the key to this dimension of leisure participation. However, money is a necessary but not yet a sufficient basis for social participation in these activities; the other necessary element is free time.

Distribution of 'Free Time' Leisure Time Opportunities

An estimate of the amount of leisure time⁵ available to individuals was derived from a regression analysis of the 1992 Time Use Survey (ABS,

5 'Leisure time' in this paper is defined as time spent in activities classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as 'social life and entertainment', 'active leisure' and 'passive leisure', hobby education and civic participation (ABS, 1993). Note also, that on the advice of special convened focus groups, time spent in gardening is included in the Budget Standard for Leisure, although it is conventionally classified as an 'unpaid work' activity.

1993). The results of this regression analysis⁶ are set out in Appendix Two.

The information on the duration of activities in the Time Use Survey is collected by the diary method. Thirty years of research has shown that the highest validity and reliability in the measurement of time spent in all activities is achieved by using time diaries, which are now used around the world (Baxter and Bittman, 1995; Goldschmidt-Clermont and Pagnossin-Aligisakis, 1995; Niemi, 1993; Paillé, 1993; Robinson and Gershuny, 1994; Robinson and Godbey, 1997). Since individuals complete the diaries, it is possible to conduct a separate analysis for each gender. In this way it possible to peer into the ‘black box’ of household distribution of leisure time in a way that is not yet possible with data on leisure expenditure.

By contrast with access to leisure goods and services, time use surveys show that income⁷ plays an *insignificant* role in the distribution of leisure time. The amount of leisure time available depends significantly on the individual’s sex, employment status, age and family circumstances. Family characteristics include the presence of a spouse, age of spouse, employment status of the spouse and the presence of children of various ages.

Everything else being equal, men have 3 hours 17 minutes more leisure a week than women. Although the gender gap in leisure becomes narrower if gardening is considered ‘unpaid work’ rather than ‘leisure’, there is a persistent pattern of relative disadvantage for women evident in the results of the analysis. Whenever the influence of factors that increase

6 An ordinary least squares, multiple regression procedure was employed to produce reliable estimates of the effects of each of these characteristics (day of the week, sex, age, employment, income, the presence of a spouse, age of spouse, employment status of the spouse and the presence of children of various ages) on leisure time when all other factors are held constant. Adding these effects to the constant term in appropriate combinations provides an estimate of the ‘leisure time available’ to individuals in different household types.

7 This finding holds across a range of conventional measures of the income. Unfortunately only gross weekly income was collected in the 1992 Time Use Survey, however for greatest possible consistency, equivalent household gross weekly income is the measure used in this analysis.

leisure is considered, the gain is greater for men than women. And whenever the factors that reduce or constrain leisure are considered, their effects are less severe for men.

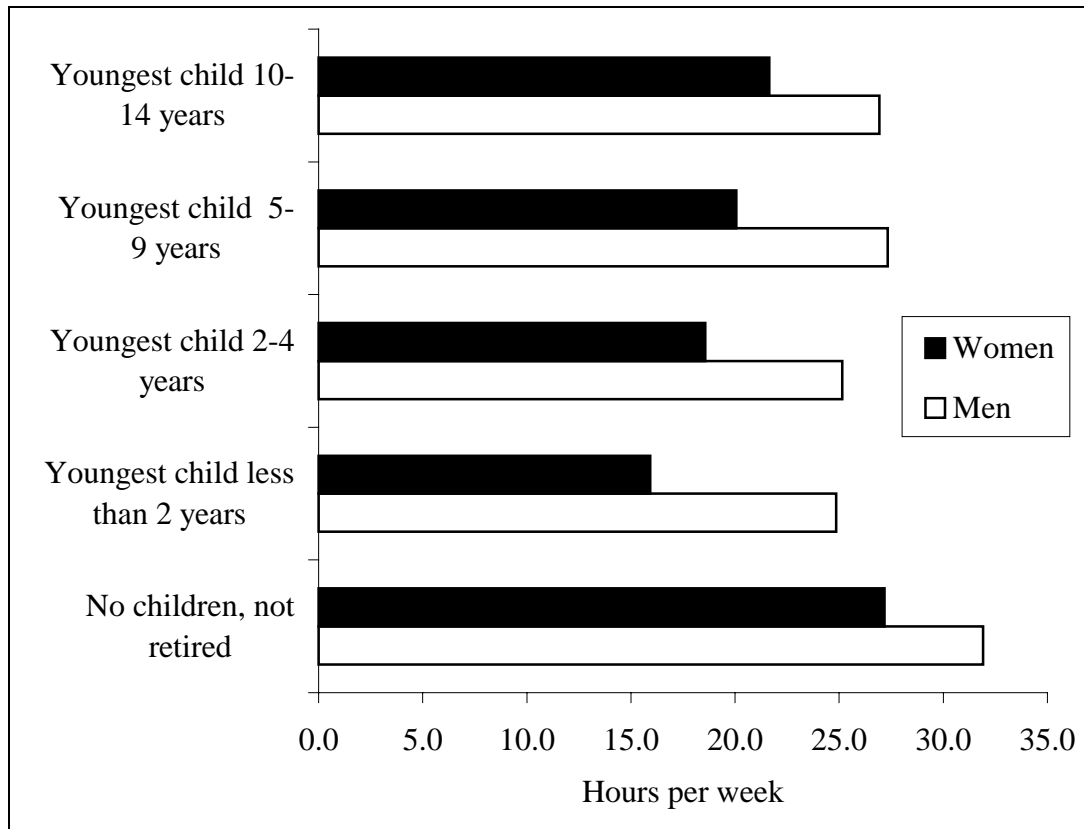
As might be expected, employment status has the greatest influence on the amount of available time for leisure participation. However, the increased leisure associated with reduced hours of employment results in greater leisure for men than for women. This is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Effects of Employment on Leisure Time by Gender



Parenthood profoundly reduces the amount of leisure time available to both men and women. Generally the impact is greatest when the child is very young and this impact diminishes as the child matures. Motherhood reduces leisure possibilities more seriously than fatherhood. Figure 5 summarises how the age of the youngest child affects parent's leisure time, when parents are assumed to be aged 35 years, employed full time and have a partner who is employed full time.

Figure 5: Leisure Time Availability by Life Course Stage, Parents Aged 35, Employed Full Time



Whereas men with no children have 17 per cent more leisure time than comparable women, fathers of children of pre-school age (under two) have 56 per cent more leisure than comparable mothers. Once the youngest child is aged between two and nine years, fathers have about a third more leisure time than mothers do, but once the youngest child reaches its teens the father's advantage falls to a quarter.

Among men, when all other factors are held constant, leisure time increases slowly with age, while the age of their spouse has no significant effect upon their weekly hours of leisure. The estimated effect on the leisure of a 65-year-old man, compared to a 25-year-old man, would be a net gain of two hours extra leisure per week, over and above the effect of retiring from the work force. This holds true whether or not the man is married. However, among women the obverse is true. Although women's leisure time increases with advancing age, at a faster rate than for men, this is almost completely offset by a significant decrease in their leisure as their spouse ages. Thus the net effect of reaching 65 years for a single woman is a six hours per week increase in

leisure time, over and above the effects of withdrawing from the labour force. For otherwise comparable married women, the net effect is a negligible increase in leisure time.

Leisure has a social patterning by weekday/weekend. Weekends are the time for extra leisure, which peaks on Sunday. All other things being equal, compared to women, men also enjoy more additional leisure on weekends. Starting from a higher base, compared to women, men enjoy both larger absolute amounts of leisure and a higher proportional increase on both Saturdays and Sundays.

Leisure Time Poverty

Up to this point I have presented separately each of the factors affecting the distribution of leisure time. In reality, however, these effects are cumulative. A 35-year-old mother of a pre-schooler, for example, has a child below the age of five years, may have a partner five years older than herself and be in full-time employment. The predicted leisure time for this mother would be 15 hours per week. On the other hand, a 70-year-old retired male could expect to spend 57 hours 37 minutes a week in leisure activities.

A commonly employed standard used to benchmark (income) poverty internationally is 50 per cent of the median.⁸ Households with income that is lower than 50 per cent of the median are judged to be 'poor'. Applying an analogous standard (50 per cent of the median leisure time) to the basic household types used in the Budget Standards Project we can get some idea of what social situation produces the most severe kinds of time poverty. Half-median leisure time for the whole adult population is 19 hours 15 minutes per week.

The major causes of leisure time poverty are gender, family responsibilities and longer hours of work. Therefore those most at risk of time poverty have combinations of disadvantageous characteristics, this

8 The half-median standard of poverty is used widely by specialists analysing data in the Luxembourg Income Study and by NATSEM in Australia (Saunders, 1994: 116, 140). The idea of treating time-poverty on analogy to income poverty was first suggested to me by Robert E. Goodin (Bittman and Goodin, 1998).

is shown in Table 1. This table is based on the effects predicted by the regression model shown in Appendix One.

Table 1: Parents and Time Poverty

Parent	Woman 35 years in couple		Sole adult		Man 40 years in couple	
	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time	
Work status						
Work status of partner	Full time	Not in labour force	Full time	-	-	Full time
Leisure hours per week, relative to half-median leisure time						
Youngest child <2 yrs	-6.88	0.06	-0.36	-1.20	5.33	1.88
Youngest child <5 yrs	-4.24	2.70	2.28	1.45	7.97	2.17
Youngest child <9 yrs	-2.74	4.20	3.78	2.94	9.47	4.36
Youngest child <15 yrs	-1.17	5.77	5.35	4.52	11.04	3.96
No children	4.38	4.38	10.90	10.07	16.59	8.94

Mothers of very young children who are employed full time are most at risk. This risk is greatest when they have a partner who also works full time. Indeed, mothers in a couple where both adults work full time suffer from the most severe time poverty as long as their children are aged younger than 15 years, although this becomes less severe as the child matures.

The data indicate that there are three things that might relieve this situation. The first path – part-time work – is commonly chosen by families and is, according to Wolcott and Glezer (1995), the path heavily preferred by Australian women. Reducing weekly hours of work raises all women above the leisure-time poverty line, except for women with a youngest child below the age of two years and a partner in full-time work.

The other, less travelled, path where mothers continue to be employed full time is to have a partner who is not in the labour force. According to the predictions of the regression model developed in this paper (see Appendix Two), the presence of stay-at-home fathers would raise the leisure time of their full-time working partners above the leisure-poverty line.

A third path is divorce. Compared with their partnered counterparts in similar employment situations, lone mothers have significantly more leisure time. Lone mothers are not exposed to time poverty. Moreover, although all fathers are relatively deprived of leisure, in comparison to men without children, they do not fall below the time-poverty line, even when their children are very young. It is possible that dissatisfaction with this situation is a motive for divorce. This finding draws attention to the differential impact of family responsibilities according to gender.

3 Policy Responses Available

Inadequate leisure opportunities lead to social exclusion. Access to leisure is dependent on both time and money. Neither time nor money by itself is a sufficient condition for leisure. After studying patterns of distribution of both leisure consumption and time available for leisure activities, we might propose some tentative guidelines for policies aimed at addressing this form of social exclusion.

Leisure consumption opportunities are related powerfully to income. Few other factors have any statistically significant effect on the consumption of leisure goods and services. In other words, the influence of factors other than income is small. It follows that an adequate income security policy would ensure that households had the capacity to purchase sufficient leisure goods and services. Given an adequate income, all households would be lifted above the leisure consumption poverty line, just as a rising tide lifts all boats. To date the two obstacles to formulating this policy have been the failure to acknowledge leisure needs and the lack of any standard by which to judge whether leisure expenditure is adequate. The neglect of leisure needs seems strongest in Anglo-Saxon societies with their history of dividing the destitute into the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor. This tradition makes arguing for leisure needs politically hazardous and many people, seeking to achieve some alleviation of poverty, have specifically excluded any suggestion for the support of leisure. On the other hand, the very lack of tradition is a problem when it comes to estimating the money costs of leisure. Fortunately, the Budget Standard developed by the Social Policy Research Centre seeks explicitly to determine a standard of adequacy.

The basis of this determination is set out in detail in the official publication (Saunders et al., 1998).

The issue of the time costs of leisure is more complex and permits only a multi-pronged approach. As has been shown, leisure time poverty has three main causes: longer hours of work, family responsibilities and gender.

There is now a revitalisation of the industrial politics of working hours. Most specialists agree that standard working hours have been eroded by the casualisation of the work force, the popularity of part-time work, the growth of the '24-hour society' in retailing, early retirement, and so on (Donaldson, 1996). These discussions are most advanced in Europe, where 'overwork' and unemployment are seen as the two faces of the coin of maldistributed working hours (Buchanan and Bearfield, 1997). A re-regulation of working hours could address the problem of time poverty, regardless of its success in reducing unemployment. A central consideration is the situation of working parents.

However, there has been far less attention paid to the time costs of parenthood, especially in the sense of social exclusion. With the birth rate falling across the advanced industrial world, renewed attention is being paid to the high costs of children (McDonald, 1997). The total fertility rate in Australia has fallen from close to six live births per woman in the middle of last century, to less than two at the close of this century (McDonald, 1995). In some countries fertility has fallen to levels that threaten something approaching extinction of a whole people. McDonald notes that 'in a stable population with the level of fertility applying in 1995 in Italy, population size would drop in just 100 years to 14 per cent of its initial level' (McDonald, 1997: 2).⁹ In explaining how advanced industrial societies reduced their fertility to such a low rate, Caldwell (1976) argued that this 'demographic transition' followed the reversal of the flow of wealth between the generations. In centuries gone by, having children had been a way of parents securing their economic

9 On the basis of the same assumption, the population in 2095 would be 15 per cent of its current level in Spain, 17 per cent in Germany, 26 per cent in Greece and 28 per cent in Japan (McDonald, 1997: 2).

future; in contemporary society children became a strain on their parents' economic resources.

Although there is a voluminous literature on how to measure the 'true' costs of children (see Nelson, 1996 for a review of this literature), little attention has been given to time costs of children.¹⁰ Even less attention has been directed at the leisure disutility of children. Compared to those without children, parents enjoy fewer hours of leisure time. Moreover, some research I am currently undertaking with Judy Wajcman of the Australian National University, suggests that what leisure parents do enjoy might be of a lower quality. Parents' leisure is significantly more likely to be fragmented and to be combined with unpaid work activities, and parents are less likely to be able to follow adult leisure pursuits.

What policy instruments could address the leisure gap between parents and non-parents? Parental leave is one method of freeing parents' time by reducing paid work commitments. This could take the form of maternity or paternity leave, or both. Paid parental leave ensures some level of redistribution of both time and money to parents. Some countries, especially in Scandinavia, have generous forms of parental leave, with a long duration (12 months, in some cases), high replacement rates (70-90 per cent of earnings) and continuing entitlements to shorter working days for pre-school-age children (Leira, 1992). The data suggest that the ability of either parent to reduce hours of employment makes a significant difference. Child care subsidies are another instrument which could be effective in this context, especially if non-work related needs for child care were treated as legitimate (Bergmann, 1997). Guidelines for what would constitute an adequate level of 'child carer's relief' would need to be developed. The Budget Standards employed a minimum based on sufficient time for physical exercise as a normative standard (Saunders et al., 1998) and an alternative half-median standard has been proposed in this paper. Either standard could become a basis for policy discussion.

Finally, but unavoidably, thought must be given to the relationship between gender, work and family. The data presented here suggest that

10 An important exception is the work of Patricia Apps and her co-workers (Apps and Rees, 1995).

only women are at risk of time-poverty. The indications are that this results from the assignment of domestic and family responsibility by gender. In 1956, Myrdal and Klein first argued that there was a social revolution under way and that it was now possible 'for women to envisage the idea of work outside the home as a career for life without any feeling of self-denial or resignation' (Myrdal and Klein, 1968: 8-9). Since then, there have been two contrasting predictions about how contemporary society will adjust to this change. Some have argued that an independent income will so strengthen women's domestic bargaining power so much that men and women will share housework and child care equally. The alternative has been to argue that it will prove difficult to change the assignment of family responsibilities by gender, and women will be obliged to assume a 'dual burden'. In a pattern called 'pseudomutuality', the idea of the egalitarian family has been enthusiastically adopted but unfortunately without any actual reassignment of tasks (Bittman and Pixley, 1997:145-71). Men's behaviour, as distinct from their beliefs, have proved difficult to alter. At the same time, women have been adapting to the new situation more quickly, seeking to vary their hours of employment and making adjustments to reduce the time spent in many domestic tasks. In this process, the growth of institutions beyond the home which replace the domestic labour of wives has played a crucial role (Bittman, 1998). The institutions that give greatest leverage in combating gender equity, arising from the domestic division of labour, also turn out to be the same institutions that most alleviate the leisure-time poverty of parents. An expansion of these services would be a step in ameliorating social exclusion from leisure among parents, and especially working mothers.

Appendix One

Multiple Regression of Weekly Household Leisure Expenditure (dollars) by Life Course, Employment and Income

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
Disposable income (\$)	0.0797	0.0033	0.2886	24.2030	0.0000
Youngest child less than 5 years (1=yes)	-16.5567	3.9215	-0.0469	-4.2220	0.0000
Youngest child 5-9 years (1=yes)	3.7157	4.6317	0.0088	0.8020	0.4224
Youngest child 10-12 years (1=yes)	3.2927	6.0904	0.0058	0.5410	0.5888
Youngest child 13-14 years (1=yes)	-15.9334	7.4535	-0.0227	-2.1380	0.0326
Youngest child 15-17 years (1=yes)	15.1631	6.5492	0.0249	2.3150	0.0206
Youngest child 18-20 years (1=yes)	34.0322	8.9931	0.0396	3.7840	0.0002
Weekly hours of employment (reference person)	2.4779	2.4066	0.0128	1.0300	0.3032
Employed spouse (1=yes)	7.7564	3.1613	0.0305	2.4540	0.0142
Sole parent (1=yes)	-6.6283	4.8326	-0.0151	-1.3720	0.1702
Reference person aged 60 years or more (1=yes)	-9.0689	3.6707	-0.0323	-2.4710	0.0135
(Constant)	31.5369	3.3873		9.3100	0.0000
Adjusted R-squared	.11110				

Source: ABS 1993-94 Household Expenditure Survey.

Appendix Two

Multiple Regression of Male Weekly Leisure Time by Life Course, Employment and Income

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
Age	0.0512	0.0243	0.0342	2.1030	0.0355
Spouse x spouse's age	-0.0421	0.0408	-0.0384	-1.0300	0.3030
Employed p/t	8.3257	1.0386	0.0877	8.0160	0.0000
Sole parent (1=yes)	17.2221	1.0264	0.1912	16.7800	0.0000
Reference person aged 60 years or more (1=yes)	19.0881	0.8537	0.3078	22.3580	0.0000
Spouse employed f/t (1=yes)	-1.7241	1.8558	-0.0243	-0.9290	0.3529
Spouse employed p/t (1=yes)	0.8160	2.0461	0.0117	0.3990	0.6901
Spouse unemployed (1=yes)	2.4222	2.3834	0.0156	1.0160	0.3095
Spouse NILF	4.3167	2.1059	0.0739	2.0500	0.0404
Saturday	20.3509	0.7855	0.2729	25.9080	0.0000
Sunday	24.3030	0.8163	0.3139	29.7710	0.0000
Youngest child 10-14 years (1=yes)	-4.9767	1.1107	-0.0511	-4.4810	0.0000
Youngest child less than 2 years (1=yes)	-7.0562	1.2886	-0.0711	-5.4760	0.0000
Youngest child 2-4 years (1=yes)	-6.7664	1.3421	-0.0623	-5.0420	0.0000
Youngest child 5-9 years (1=yes)	-4.5771	1.1741	-0.0462	-3.8990	0.0001
Equivalent disposable income (\$)	-0.0006	0.0006	-0.0131	-1.0870	0.2769
(Constant)	30.1194	1.0397		28.9690	0.0000
Adjusted R-squared	0.3103				

Multiple Regression of Female Weekly Leisure Time by Life Course, Employment and Income

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
Age	0.1519	0.0191	0.1122	7.9670	0.0000
Spouse x spouse's age	-0.1422	0.0364	-0.1555	-3.9090	0.0001
Employed p/t	6.5235	0.7192	0.1189	9.0700	0.0000
Sole parent (1=yes)	14.7163	1.1061	0.1567	13.3050	0.0000
Reference person aged 60 years or more (1=yes)	12.7950	0.7168	0.2703	17.8500	0.0000
Spouse employed f/t (1=yes)	2.2082	1.6956	0.0459	1.3020	0.1929
Spouse employed p/t (1=yes)	3.2650	2.2826	0.0242	1.4300	0.1526
Spouse unemployed (1=yes)	2.9133	2.0735	0.0232	1.4050	0.1601
Spouse NILF	6.9422	2.3621	0.0975	2.9390	0.0033
Saturday	15.7577	0.6984	0.2382	22.5620	0.0000
Sunday	18.0059	0.7176	0.2652	25.0910	0.0000
Youngest child 10-14 years (1=yes)	-5.5461	0.9261	-0.0665	-5.9890	0.0000
Youngest child less than 2 years (1=yes)	-11.2610	1.0474	-0.1307	-10.7510	0.0000
Youngest child 2-4 years (1=yes)	-8.6179	1.0613	-0.0946	-8.1200	0.0000
Youngest child 5-9 years (1=yes)	-7.1205	0.9459	-0.0851	-7.5270	0.0000
Equivalent disposable income (\$)	0.0000	0.0006	0.0000	0.0040	0.9969
(Constant)	26.8442	0.9647		27.8260	0.9969
Adjusted R-squared	0.2308				

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