



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Mid-term Conference of Research Committee on *Sociology of Leisure* (RC 13)



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PALERMO

DIPARTIMENTO DI STUDI SU POLITICA, DIRITTO E SOCIETÀ

DPDS



Facoltà di

Scienze della Formazione

Università degli Studi di Palermo

### Mapping Leisure across Borders

University of Palermo, Italy, September 29-30 / October 1, 2011

#### Introduction

Leisure has become an important domain in sociological research. While time is often spent in daily “pressing” activities, leisure time, in its multifaceted aspects, is rather oriented to convey new answers for individual and collective needs. Such answers are an important field for leisure studies as well as for the sociological questions connected with leisure. For instance, in developed countries, some of these answers concern the way in which leisure time may be spent in “the best way possible for me”, or “for my family”, or “for me with my friends”, hence focusing on leisure time as a new *basic human need* oriented to foster self-realization. However, this idea of leisure as nurturing for self-realization may also lead to give up collective needs in favour of individualistic ones. In fact, over the last fifty years, the construction of specific meanings of leisure has increasingly followed the “individualizing” dynamics originated by the postmodern process of de-institutionalization.

A thorough sociological analysis, including the specialized one derived from different applied sociologies, should study the practices *of* and *in* leisure time according to a perspective that takes into due consideration how the individual and collective meaning of leisure is coherently constructed as a *choice* to carry out certain activities, that is as a contextual effect whose framework is given by a specific meaning always-already socially defined. Compared to the past, however, the criteria for distinguishing among different conditions of belonging have today changed. Whereas in modern society class, age, gender, etc. were highly influential in determining the practices of leisure time, today this is no longer the case since the sense of belonging is much “weaker” due to a “de-differentiation” of the identity markers to appeal to in order to take leisure choices. Therefore, leisure *time*, as well as leisure *space*, represent a discursive construction whose sense is defined both by the specific meaning constructed by the individual and by the process of *institutionalization* – as Berger and Luckmann (1969) would put it – that makes time, space and experience *recognizable* as “situations” for relaxation. They are therefore the effect of a social construction, on the one hand, but also, on the other, of the different social conditions existing, at a certain historical moment, in different societies.

As a consequence of the diversified reactions individuals have with regards to this de-differentiation, the borders among the various aspects of leisure are increasingly being blurred, as

in the case, for instance, of the borders between leisure and work activities, or between the time spent for self-realization and the time exclusively destined to work.

The mid-term Conference of the ISA RC13 aims at thinking over this *border crossing* by focusing on the specificities of “de-differentiated” leisure through the following sessions.

## **SESSIONS**

### **Session 1 – Leisure across paid and unpaid work**

In postmodernity the border between paid and unpaid work seems to be much more de-differentiated than in modernity. Leisure time and leisure practices may be today turned into paid work and at the same time paid work may be often extended to the contexts where leisure time is consumed. Similarly, the space and time of leisure may become an occasion for carrying out work projects. As a consequence, the relationships created in leisure and work contexts may change their original meaning and turn into some form of unprecedented relational hybrid.

### **Session 2 – Leisure across individual and collective spheres**

The borders between the satisfaction derived from an individual vs. a collective project of leisure seems today fading. Although postmodern society seems to foster individualism and self-realization so that leisure time is interpreted as “a time for the self”, at the same time it also exists a demand for a shared and co-projected leisure. Therefore, there seems to be two conflicting sets of demands – a socializing one and a self-fulfilling one – both supported by a certain kind of leisure provision. Whereas in the ‘80s Hirschman could still identify a tendency to oscillate between “private and public happiness”, that is the tendency to alternate self-satisfaction in the private sphere with self-satisfaction derived from participating actively in the public sphere, today these two contexts seems to blur and/or polarize over different phases in lifetime. Leisure time is affected by this double logic as it often oscillates between a “solitary”, “privatized” kind of consumption and a more public and collective one.

### **Session 3 – Leisure across space and place**

Space and place, just like time, have usually been quite definite domains in modern society. Not only has the leisure time industry generated the birth of leisure mass, it has more importantly contributed to “confine” the space of leisure into specific – often ludic – places of action and relations distinctly differentiated from the space and places of work. Therefore, during the XX century, a whole series of amusement and natural parks, music halls, indoor/outdoor sports arenas, etc. were created, as well as cities for fun or specific urban areas for leisure. Today the borders between leisure and work locations seem to be overpassed. Increasingly, it is the meaning given to space that defines it as place for leisure time. In fact, even the space for work may be turned – by different cultural, ethnic or age groups – into a place for leisure. Indeed, it is the meaning given to leisure that defines its location and no longer simply the other way round.

### **Session 4 – Leisure across gender, age and ethnicity**

Attending a rock concert, playing videogames (possibly online), learning how to dance, no matter your age; being part of a motor bikers reunion, enjoying bricolage, attending a cooking or a knitting course, no matter your gender; participating in a religious celebration or a cultural initiative, being a witness/officiant of a wedding ceremony performed with a ritual different from your own. This is postmodern leisure. The traditional borders between age, gender, ethnicity and culture seem to fade today. Yet, such borders are also re-instated and exacerbated as a consequence of forces – often market-driven (*men’s* and *women’s* sports, *children’s* games, *black* music, etc.) – that aggregate and select behaviors in distinct clusters of leisure consumption. In postmodern society both dimensions co-exist. There is no longer a clear-cut distinction between them, and if the case,

it is always voluntarily, temporarily and occasionally chosen. Identity is less defined by the traditional ascribing markers of belonging than by the changing meanings alternately given to them.

### **Session 5 – Leisure across disciplines: theories and methods**

The distinction between methods and techniques of quantitative and qualitative analysis is clearly a kind of linguistic mediation among researchers rather than a real contrast between different approaches to the study of social phenomena. Traditionally, social objects have been studied according to different disciplinary perspectives within the human and social sciences whose borders, as we all know, have been set mainly throughout the XXth century. These borders, although necessary for heuristic reasons, seem to fade today, either because many researchers “overflow” into “intermediate” domains or because the object of study itself is often common. Leisure has a strong interdisciplinary tradition of research precisely because of its natural tendency to overflow into psychological, social, economic, cultural, architectural, technological, etc. dimensions. The relationship between the leisure studies vs. the leisure sciences is an example of this: both are different and yet interdisciplinary by nature. Indeed, an example of epistemological richness within the rigor necessary to scientific knowledge.

### **Session 6 – Leisure across the legal and the illegal**

Leisure time, although differently defined and experienced in different cultures, is always a socially regulated phenomenon. In modern society, not only is there a clear distinction between leisure and work, but also, quite significantly, between *licit* and *illicit* leisure, as the Latin origin of the term recalls (*licere*). The socially defined connotation of leisure practices as legal or illegal has changed over time, the latter being confined within a “limited” space serving a cathartic function “controlled” by society through, for example, rituals like the carnival. Yet, this kind of social control has not been sufficient, either because the demand for illegal leisure has increased over the years, or because the business of illegal leisure has constantly fuelled the provision of illegal leisure. Therefore, the industrialization of leisure has been accompanied by the growth of out-and-out corporations in the management of illegal leisure – gambling, betting, traffic of drugs and alcohol in night clubs, etc. The Sicilian mafia, together with other international mafias, is a well-known example of this kind of activity. What is sociologically relevant is the fact that today the borders between legal and illegal leisure are increasingly being blurred, formally re-instated by the governments and yet practically inexistent. Indeed, a problem that questions the ways society defines the role and function of leisure time.

### **Session 7 - Leisure across public and private provision**

Leisure time is a domain of life where individual and collective needs are satisfied. The history of the industrialization of leisure shows that the private and public provision of leisure has changed over time and that it is still quite different in different countries. How has the private and public provision of leisure changed over time? How are public policies for leisure designed in different countries? How does a richer provision of leisure affect the different welfare systems of the world? What are the consequences of a public vs. a private provision of leisure coming from corporations exclusively aiming at improving their profit through the selling of the emotional mediations provided by leisure?

### **Session 8 – Leisure across media technologies**

The study of modern leisure cannot be undertaken without considering the importance of media technologies, both at the level of production and consumption. While there is a large body of literature examining the role of media technologies in contemporary society, comparatively little effort has been done to study their role on the provision, organization and experience of leisure. Historically, there has always been a relationship between technology and leisure, but the

increasing use of ICTs devices and services during leisure time is causing such a transformation in contemporary leisure activity that, for example, leisure and Internet cannot be studied without the other.

### **Session 9 – Leisure across formal/informal learning**

Education is now seen as a dynamic lifelong learning process which takes place at work, in leisure time as well as in traditional educational institutions. Leisure activities (sport, music and dance lessons, club activities, computer gaming, online communication, digital content production/upload/download or simply web browsing) have increasingly been defined as “new learning environments” or “arenas” for modern children (and adults as well). The new social situations of leisure activities set new challenges for individuals enhancing special types of competence that may counteract/support/blend with the types of competence traditionally enacted within formal educational contexts. This session intends to focus on experiences of learning and socialization connected to leisure activities. It also wants to focus on how the characteristics of late modernity involved in children’s and adults’ competence connect to or interact with their social situations, i.e. the social groups they belong to, their values and norms.

## **GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSALS**

Deadline for proposals is May 15, 2011. Acceptance will be notified by June 30, 2011. Following acceptance, full papers are due by October 30, 2011 (Please confine papers within 8000 words using the reference pattern of the ISA Journals: *Current Sociology* / *International Sociology*).

Later proposal submissions will continue to be considered subject to the availability of appropriate space on the program.

Proposals are to be structured as follows:

### **AUTHOR/S DETAILS**

1. Name and full contact details for all contributing authors.
2. Biography – 100/150 words each author (please do not exceed word limit). The biographical description for each contributing author should include information on her/his field of study, main research interests, and key publications, if any.

**ABSTRACT** – 150/300 words (please do not exceed word limit) to include the following:

1. Title of paper; relation of the paper to themes/sessions of the conference.
2. An indication of the broad theoretical orientation (where appropriate to the proposal).
3. A description of the forms of original research that the paper will report on and/or a summary of the types of material the paper will discuss.
4. An indication of related work by others (include bibliographic references)
5. Four keywords.

### **Please note:**

- \* The abstract must not contain tables / illustrations or footnotes.
- \* Bibliographical references must be included for any cited work

## REGISTRATION

All program participants must register **before July 10, 2011**.

Registration fees are divided into three categories: A, B, and C. Each participant must identify the economy category in which her/his country of residence is classified and pay the registration fee corresponding to this category. [See the table of economies](#).

There are different fees available for ISA Members and Non-Members. ISA Members are scholars who paid to the ISA Secretariat in Madrid their individual membership fees for the current year. To join ISA see "[Individual Membership](#)".

Different fees are also available for the members of the Associazione Italiana di Sociologia (AIS) who paid to the AIS Secretariat in Rome their individual membership fees for the current year. To join AIS see "[Iscrizione AIS](#)".

Registration fees include: conference fees, conference materials, scheduled meals and reception and a copy of conference abstracts. Accommodations or transportations are not included.

**FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE PROGRAM, REGISTRATION, ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER INFORMATION WILL BE SHORTLY AVAILABLE ON THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE [WWW.LEISUREACROSSBORDERS.IT](http://WWW.LEISUREACROSSBORDERS.IT) (UNDER CONSTRUCTION).**

### Registration Fees

	<b>Before July 10, 2011</b>	<b>After July 10, 2011</b>
<b>Category A</b>		
ISA members/AIS members	<b>€ 150</b>	<b>€ 200</b>
Non member	<b>€ 200</b>	<b>€ 250</b>
<b>Category B</b>		
ISA member	<b>€ 100</b>	<b>€ 150</b>
Non member	<b>€ 150</b>	<b>€ 200</b>
<b>Category C</b>		
ISA member	<b>€ 50</b>	<b>€ 100</b>
Non member	<b>€ 100</b>	<b>€ 150</b>

## VENUE

### University of Palermo

In 1806 Ferdinand III of Bourbon, King of Naples and the Two Sicilies, transformed the Palermo Academy of Studies into a university, granting it the power to bestow degrees in Theology, Medicine, Law, and Arts – a conquest the city had awaited for centuries.

Today the University of Palermo (UNIPA) is a consolidated cultural, scientific and teaching presence in central-western Sicily. Its 12 Faculties and 33 Departments cover the most important domains of contemporary scientific and technological knowledge. About 130 courses (first and second cycle) are yearly offered as well as 50 master and specialization and 90 PhD courses, targeted to the training of specific professional figures, often in cooperation with external institutions and companies – a galaxy which attracted 12,600 first-year students in the academic year 2009/2010 and which altogether counts 65,000 students.

The University General Hospital is a local health corporation that works in synergy with the Faculty of Medicine. It provides 558 beds, 102 day-hospital beds, and a first-aid service.

UNIPA is also present in Agrigento (Cultural Heritage Area), Caltanissetta (Medicine), Trapani (Law, Agriculture, Medicine).

Photo gallery at: <http://portale.unipa.it/internationalstudents/home/photogallery1.html>

### Palermo City

Palermo is Sicily's cultural, economic and touristic capital. It is a city rich in history, culture, art, music and food. Numerous tourists are attracted to the city for its good Mediterranean weather, its renowned gastronomy and restaurants, its Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque churches, palaces and buildings, and its nightlife and music. Palermo is also known for its traditional and colorful fruit, vegetable and fish markets, known as the *Vucciria* and *Ballarò*.

Palermo is the main Sicilian industrial and commercial center: the main industrial sectors include tourism, services, commerce and agriculture. It has an international airport. In fact, for cultural, artistic and economic reasons, Palermo was one of the largest cities in the Mediterranean and is now among the top tourist destinations in both Italy and Europe. The city also works through careful redevelopment, preparing to become one of the major cities of Euro-Mediterranean area.

The population of the Palermo urban area is estimated by Eurostat to be 855,285, while its metropolitan area is the fifth most populated in Italy with around 1.2 million people. In the central area, the city has a population of around 670,000 people.

Photo and video gallery at:

[http://www.comune.palermo.it/comune/assessorato\\_turismo/index\\_turismo.htm](http://www.comune.palermo.it/comune/assessorato_turismo/index_turismo.htm)

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