

leg room than a Porche, better fuel economy than a Mercedes''. More importantly, whilst the book recognises other forces, its ultimate restructuring criteria are economic, which underrates the reality of Hong Kong's unique social and political imperatives.

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Leisure and Life-Style: A Comparative Analysis of Free Time edited by Anna Olszewska and K. Roberts

(Sage Publications, London, 1989), pp. 200, £ 27.50, ISBN 0-8039-8215-1.

This collection of essays forms the 38th volume in the Sage Studies in International Sociology series, sponsored by the International Sociological Association. It was originally intended to appear as a collection of chapters by a team of international authors under the title *Leisure and the Crisis*; its original focus being the anticipated profound effect of the global economic recession of the early 1980s on patterns of leisure and life-style. At the time this global crisis was expected to shatter the expectations of an earlier generation of sociologists of leisure who had experienced almost 30 years of economic progress and technological advance and so assumed an ever-expanding quantity of free time. The book, as originally conceived, assumed that much of the economic and social strain generated by the crisis would be absorbed by deleterious changes in the field of leisure. However, having had one sociological vision undermined by the events of history, the editors of this volume were placed in a doubly embarrassing position, for the assumptions which underlay their planned book were themselves further undermined by events when the global economic crisis did not take on the severe, destructive or chronic qualities predicted; the sociological consequences also were frequently contrary to expectation. The present title of the book is, in this sense, perhaps the best they could come up with for a somewhat ramshackle collection of essays constantly being overtaken by history. The editors themselves admit that some of the contributors "ignored the guidelines completely and none was wholly faithful" (p. 5).

The volume contains 11 chapters. Apart from the introduction and the concluding piece, which concerns international tourism in general, the other nine are country specific. The choice of countries, was, we are told, not arbitrary. Poland, Hungary, Great Britain, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Japan, France, USA cover, between them, rich and poor, east and west, capitalist and socialist. Availability of authors, however, was a factor, so the list is not perfect; the omission of Germany, for instance, is a pity. Those chapters which do stick with the original brief of the collection point up a variety of reactions in the leisure field to the economic decline, the rising unemployment, and so on, of the early 1980s. In some countries there was a clear shift to passive and home-based recreation;

in some the misery was fairly evenly distributed, whilst in yet others there was a pronounced polarisation by geographical region, with a noticeable widening of the gap between rich and poor; in yet others free time declined as people worked longer hours to maintain their standard of living. Such a range of reactions is clearly worth knowing about, although I should imagine that readers of quality newspapers in the countries concerned would find very little that is revealing in the discussions set out here.

Dumazedier has long argued that the greatly increased importance of leisure in modern society warranted a new sociological theory. Unfortunately, theory is noticeably lacking in this collection, with most of the country case studies being descriptive accounts of possibly short-run trends, some being supported by a smattering of statistics. Bosserman suggests that we may now have a type of societal solidarity for which Durkheim did not allow, but no-one rises to the theoretical challenge. No-one even thought it fit seriously to come to grips with the ideological nature of the central concept of free time itself, despite the powerful criticisms made by authors such as Rojek in *Capitalism and Leisure Theory*. We can add to this the observation of Dumazedier himself that "Modern leisure is so difficult to define precisely that it is tempting to proscribe the term" (p. 143). What is a reader meant to conclude about the conceptual vitality of the sociology of leisure from such a comment? What exactly is the relationship between the concepts of free time, recreation and leisure? Some clarifications really are required, otherwise an unacceptable vagueness will prevail. For Brazil, we are told that time-budgets include political and religious activities and non-compulsory studies under free time (p. 86). For Puerto Rico, we are told that: "leisure expenditure is computed only on the basis of gate receipts at recreational spectacles . . . and does not include items such as travel to these, or leisure" (p. 105). How are we meant to be enticed by this sub-field if the editors themselves betray a sense of tiredness and even boredom with comments such as: "We suspect that . . . Dumazedier . . . would have emphasised the same trends and offered broadly the same interpretations had he been asked to write about France in the 1960s rather than the 1980s or, for that matter, about the USA or Poland rather than France" (p. 5)?

There is one gripping discussion in the book, and it is the chapter on trends in international tourism by Lanfant; it really does not belong in the book at all. The overall theme of her account is that international tourism was not substantially set back by the crisis in the early 1980s at all. Indeed, she asks whether this industry has acquired an immunity to the cyclical realities of the modern world. For her, tourist organisations are the prototype for the transnational corporations in the world economy, possessing all the characteristics of the emergent world economic system. These matters, clearly of considerable moment, only serve to raise another problem with the book; why is it that most of the other chapters hardly mention tourism at all — the largest industry in the world — and fail to do so despite the fact (p. 7) that given the economic woes of the early 1980s in many countries existing holiday facilities were increasingly geared to international tourism. There is something odd here in the structure of social scientific knowledge which means that experts in the sociology of leisure seem to possess such little interest in tourism. It is, of course, interesting to know that in the period 1970-85 expenditure on stamp collecting in Belgium remained fairly constant (p. 80), but there are some rather more weighty concerns to get to grips with too.

The interesting article by Lanfant concludes a rather uninspiring collection which will scarcely achieve the editors' goal of bringing the sociology of leisure in from the margins of academe and into the mainstream of sociological discourse. More than this, though, it is amazing that the editors still feel fit, given the chequered history of the particular collection assembled here, to state: "This book's, like sociology's historical purpose is to alert the world to the true facts of its predicament" (p. 16). A sociology doubly caught out by the events of history, which still portrays itself in such a portentous fashion, risks making the whole discipline, and not just one of its sub-fields, look somewhat silly.

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