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**Socio-demographic Patterns of Leisure Behaviour  
of Adolescents in Hong Kong**

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**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS OF LEISURE BEHAVIOUR  
OF ADOLESCENTS IN HONG KONG**

by  
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# SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS OF LEISURE BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENTS IN HONG KONG

## Introduction

This is a report on some preliminary findings on the patterns of leisure behaviour of adolescents who are in their secondary school years.

The significance of leisure to adolescents can be recognized if one sees adolescence as a period of growth and development in which the individual attempts to crystallize personal identities through creativity, experimentation and excitement (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1975). Young people are usually energetic, curious, variable, and adaptable. They are adventurous, imaginative, and interested in new environments and things. They make friends, run into problems, and make mistakes. But this is all part of their learning and socialization. Their leisure is likely to be made up of a large variety of activities, many of which are group-based and hence anchor the adolescent in a subculture that exists beyond both the home and the school.

The study of leisure is a relatively neglected topic in sociology. It is only in the last two decades or so that the sociological approach to the many aspects of leisure has attracted the attention of a small number of scholars. Understandably, a primary concern has long been the conceptualization of leisure in contra-distinction to work (e.g., Anderson, 1961; Parker, 1965, 1976; Dunkerley, 1975; Johannis and Bull, 1971; Dumazedier, 1967, 1974). Other scholars have paid more attention to leisure as an integral part of social life: work is not the only framework in which the meaning of leisure may be understood (e.g., Cheek and Burch, 1976; Katz and Gurevitch, 1976; Roberts, 1978; Kelly, 1982). More recently, the leisure of young people

has received particular attention among some writers who have attempted to relate leisure behaviour of youth to the expectations and concerns of young people in their period of growth and development during which school life looms large (e.g., Emmett, 1971; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1975; Poole, 1983; Hendry, 1978, 1983).

Age and sex have been found to be important independent variables in understanding the variation in leisure activities. A British survey (Sillitoe, 1969) found that for young single people, aged 15 to 22, leisure interest consisted mainly of physical recreation. In their study of over 2000 families in the London region, Young and Willmott (1973) found that age made more differences than other factors (such as occupational status, income, and education) in accounting for the average number of leisure activities: the younger took part in more leisure activities. Similarly, Katz and Gurevitch (1976) found that, in general, age is more important than educational attainment in affecting participation in out-of-home activities. Thus, young people were found to participate in such popular activities as cinema-going and light entertainment extensively. They also found that at each age level, men spent more time with friends than did women. Women were found to spend more time with children and, as also indicated in Young and Willmott's (1973) study, with family relations. In their study of British manufacturing workers in Luton, Goldthorpe and his associates (1969) found that wives tended to associate with kin and neighbours during leisure time more than their husbands did.

Studies such as those cited tend to demonstrate that leisure activities are very much related to people's roles as marked by their age and gender. Leisure is not used strictly according to one's own idiosyncratic wishes or

wants but, as Cheek and Burch have argued, "variations in the nature of nonwork activities are ... rather clearly determined by the role networks associated with given stages of the life cycle." (Cheek and Burch, 1976: 100) Roberts has even claimed that "the influence of work upon leisure is much less powerful than ... familial variables." (Roberts, 1978: 109) This line of reasoning is particularly plausible when one examines the role expectations associated with various social relationships and life styles in the broader family life cycle. Social networks facilitate the acquisition of interests, for instance, and require the participation of group members in certain common activities for the maintenance of such networks. The interests themselves, their appropriateness, and the specific form of leisure activities may be culturally defined. Thus, what is considered proper for males may not be so desirable for females. Further, the same individual at different ages is likely to find that the meaning and appropriateness of given activities change according to what the new requirements are. Sometimes peer acceptance may depend on it. Indeed, leisure activities are often the manifestation of subcultures, including those characterized by age and sex. This is perhaps even more markedly so in the case of adolescent subcultures.

The data for this report, obtained from the self-administered questionnaire survey of 1403 secondary school pupils in Hong Kong in 1983, are based on the following questions related to leisure: (1) a checklist of 16 pre-categorized leisure activities for the respondent to indicate whether a given type of leisure activity was taken up in the previous month; (2) companions, if any (parents, siblings, relatives, schoolmates, friends, neighbours) with whom a leisure activity was taken up; (3) three types of leisure activity (from the given checklist) that were most frequently engaged

in during the past month; and (4) three types of leisure activity that were most liked (irrespective of whether the activity was actually engaged in during the past month).

The findings to be reported in this paper attempt to identify the major patterns of leisure use of secondary school-age youths in terms of frequency, overall salience, variedness, and variations according to sex, age, and socio-economic status. The multifarious nature of leisure activities in terms of companionship and a comparison between most frequent participation and highest preference will also be briefly examined.

#### Classification of Leisure Activities

Since the patterns of leisure use are the main concern in this report, the way in which leisure activities are classified must be first stated.

Different studies of leisure adopt different classifications of leisure activities. In deciding on the classification of leisure activities for this study, consideration was given to the possible interests and activities of Hong Kong secondary school pupils. The scheme used is very similar to that used in a recent survey on the leisure life of Hong Kong school pupils (primary and secondary) conducted by the Hong Kong Boys and Girls Clubs Association in 1979.

In the survey questionnaire of the present study, 17 categories of leisure activity (including an "others" category) are given in a checklist. For the purposes of our analyses, some categories have been combined to result in 13 categories which makes the analyses somewhat more manageable. They actually fall into four major types (not counting the "others"): (1) mass media use, including television, radio, movies, and the print media;

(2) interest activities which involve the learning or use of particular skills or the cultivation of certain interests or hobbies (e.g., knitting, flower arrangement, object collection, handicraft, playing music instruments, dance and drama); (3) social activities (e.g., going out, window-shopping, going to tea-houses, and playing video games); and (4) physical activities, including ball games, outing, and various sports and athletics.

The thirteen categories of leisure activity used in this report are as follows:

1. watching television
2. listening to the radio or records at home
3. reading newspapers and magazines
4. reading extra-curricular books
5. going to the movies
6. household skills (cooking, knitting, flower arrangement)
7. art and craft (handicraft, model-making, collecting objects, art)
8. performing arts (playing music instruments, singing, dance, drama, prose-reading)
9. social activities (going out, going to tea-houses, video games)
10. ball games
11. picnicking and camping
12. other sports
13. other leisure activities

To conserve space, short labels will be used where necessary in the subsequent analyses.

The Relative Salience of Leisure Activities

To find out the relative popularity or salience of the various leisure activities, the respondents were asked two somewhat different questions: "Did you participate in (a given type of leisure activity) during the last month?" "Indicate the three types of leisure activity on which you spent the most time during the last month." The first question asked for simple "yes" and "no" answers for each of the 17 categories of leisure activity given in the checklist. For the second question, respondents were to mention three types of leisure activity from the list in order of most frequent participation. Since our purpose is to study the relative salience of leisure activities, responses to the second question would provide more appropriate information as they take differences in time spent into consideration. An activity type was assigned a score of "3" if it was mentioned as the most frequently participated, "2" if the second most frequently participated, "1" if the third most frequently participated, and "0" if it was not mentioned at all. In this manner, an average "overall salience score" for all the activity types could be computed. The results are shown in Table 1.

A very similar rank order of the activity types was obtained by analyzing only the activities indicated by the respondents as most frequently participated. Television watching came out top on both rank orders. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient between the two rankings is as high as 0.93. In fact, using responses to the first question stated above (only "yes" and "no" answers) as a basis for reflecting the relative salience of leisure activities produced a ranking with television watching topping the list and correlating 0.84 with the "overall salience score" ranking.

Table 1. Salience Scores of Leisure Activities

| Leisure Activity       | Salience Scores |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Television             | 1.39            |
| Social                 | 0.68            |
| Ball games             | 0.59            |
| Radio/records          | 0.58            |
| Books                  | 0.46            |
| Outing                 | 0.37            |
| Newspapers & magazines | 0.36            |
| Movies                 | 0.33            |
| Other sports           | 0.24            |
| Other activities       | 0.20            |
| Art & craft            | 0.14            |
| Performing arts        | 0.13            |
| Household skills       | 0.12            |

Table 2 gives a percentage distribution of the respondents who mentioned various leisure activities as most frequently participated. Note that in this table the leisure activities have been grouped under four major types as described earlier to facilitate interpretation. It can be seen that television watching is clearly the most popular as close to one-third of the respondents indicated that it was what they did most during their leisure time. When we consider the various mass media as a group, audio-visual and print included, they accounted for 55 per cent of the cases as their most frequent form of leisure use. This was followed by the group of various physical activities (24 per cent) among which ball games were mentioned the most (13 per cent). This reflects the association of ball games with school life. Social activities, as specified in this study, and interest activities

apparently were not at all dominant as they together accounted for only about 15 per cent of the cases.

Table 2. Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities

| Leisure Activity         | %        |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Television               | 31.5     |
| Other mass media         |          |
| Radio/records            | 8.1      |
| Movies                   | 3.8      |
| Books                    | 9.1      |
| Newspapers/magazines     | 2.8      |
| Sub-total                | 23.8     |
| Interest activities      |          |
| Household skills         | 2.0      |
| Art and craft            | 2.4      |
| Performing arts          | 1.8      |
| Sub-total                | 6.2      |
| Social activities        | 9.2      |
| Physical activities      |          |
| Ball games               | 13.2     |
| Outing and camping       | 7.6      |
| Other sports             | 3.4      |
| Sub-total                | 24.2     |
| Other leisure activities | 5.1      |
| Total                    | 100.0    |
| (N)                      | (1,310)* |

\* This excludes 93 missing cases. In all subsequent tables, the base number for percentages also excludes missing cases.

Sex Differential in Leisure Activities

Through socialization both in the home and in the school, boys and girls acquire interests in a variety of activities. Very often, such interests do not distribute in the same way between the two sexes. The differences may be associated with traditional notions of sex-role learning (e.g., boys can be more physically active while girls are more domestically oriented). They may also be associated with differential emergence of fashionable interests (e.g., popular music) within adolescent male and female subcultures which have implications for identity formation. Our data reveal that there is a clear sex differential in the most frequently participated leisure activities. Thus, more of our female respondents reported participation in television watching and listening to the radio or records than did the boys. In addition, the girls were more involved in socializing activities<sup>1</sup> and household skills, while the boys were more active in art and craft, which probably reflects some basic differences in stereotyped sex-roles. Even more noteworthy is our finding that the boys were far more likely to report engagement in the sports (32 per cent versus 15 per cent) than were the girls. Details are shown in Table 3, and profiles showing only the main groups of leisure activities are given in Figure 1.

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the girls were more involved than the boys in going out and visiting tea-houses. However, the boys' participation rate in electronic games (which were grouped under "socializing activities") was higher than that of the girls.

Table 3. Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities by Sex

| Leisure Activity         | Sex   |        |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|
|                          | Male  | Female |
|                          | %     | %      |
| Television               | 27.2  | 36.5   |
| Other mass media         |       |        |
| Radio/records            | 6.7   | 9.9    |
| Movies                   | 4.2   | 3.5    |
| Books                    | 9.5   | 8.7    |
| Newspapers/magazines     | 2.6   | 3.1    |
| Sub-total                | 23.0  | 25.2   |
| Interest activities      |       |        |
| Household skills         | 0.2   | 3.8    |
| Art and craft            | 3.4   | 1.4    |
| Performing arts          | 1.9   | 1.9    |
| Sub-total                | 5.5   | 7.1    |
| Social activities        | 7.0   | 11.2   |
| Physical activities      |       |        |
| Ball games               | 19.1  | 6.1    |
| Outing and camping       | 8.9   | 6.3    |
| Other sports             | 3.9   | 2.8    |
| Sub-total                | 31.9  | 15.2   |
| Other leisure activities | 5.6   | 4.7    |
| Total                    | 100.0 | 100.0  |
| (N)                      | (644) | (635)  |

Chi-square = 93.42,  $p < 0.001$  (df = 12)

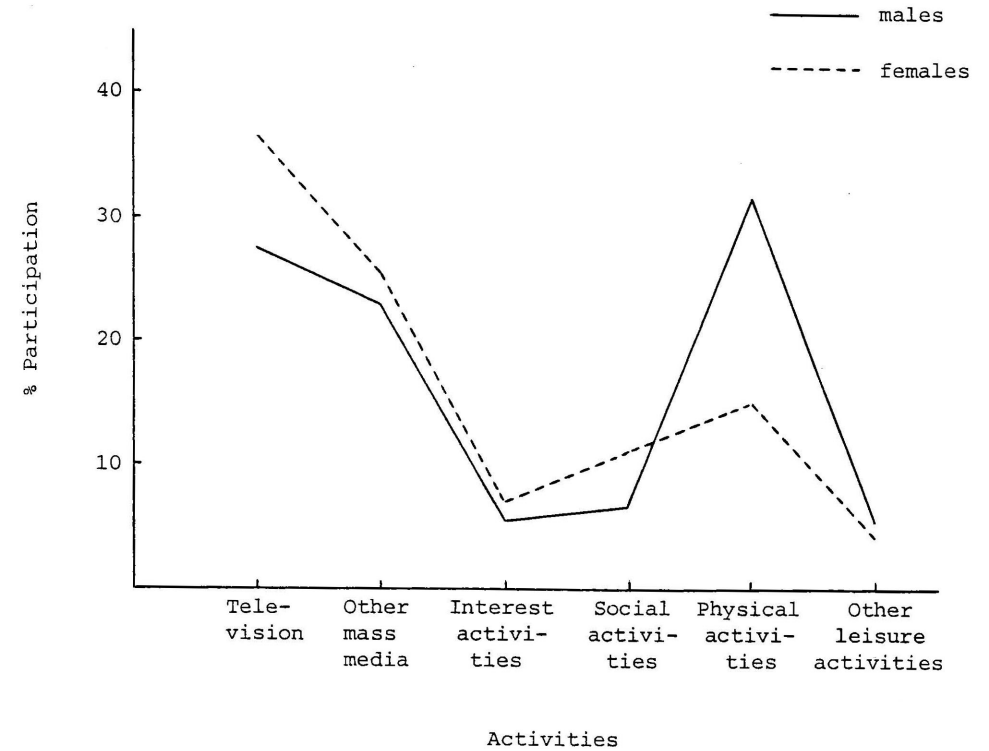


Figure 1. Profile of Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities by Sex



Profiles by Age and Socio-economic Status (SES)

The profiles of participation in leisure activities according to age (divided into three categories) show that there is statistical dependence between age and the type of leisure activity most frequently participated. As indicated in Table 4, notable age differences were found in the mass media and physical activities. With increasing age during the adolescent years, interest in television seems to decline while that in other media such as radio, records, and the print media increases. Participation rates in the various physical activities are higher in the two younger age groups but lower in the 16+ age group. Figure 2, a simpler graphic representation of the profiles, shows that the 16-year-olds and above as a group are more noticeably different from the other two younger age groups in the areas of mass media use and physical activities.

When our respondents were classified according to socio-economic status (SES), which was measured on the basis of father's education, father's occupation, family income, and type of housing<sup>2</sup>, the difference in the distribution of leisure activities was not statistically significant.

<sup>2</sup>The index of socio-economic status (SES) is a composite measure summing the scores on four variables: (1) type of housing (1=temporary housing or squatter hut; 2=resettlement estate or low-cost housing; 3=rented private housing; 4=owned private housing); (2) father's occupation (1=unskilled; 2=skilled manual; 3=clerical and sales; 4=small proprietors and self-employed; 5=lower-grade technicians and supervisors of manual workers; 6=lower-grade professionals and administrators; 7=higher professionals and administrators); (3) father's education (1=no schooling; 2=primary; 3=lower secondary; 4=higher secondary; 5=post-secondary or professional education; 6=university; 7=post-graduate); and (4) family monthly income (1=\$2000 or less; 2=\$2001-\$3000; 3=\$3001-\$4000; 4=\$4001-\$5000; 5=\$5001-\$7000; 6=\$7001-\$10000; 7=\$10001-\$15000; 8=over \$15000).

(to be continued on next page)

2 (Cont'd)

As there were many cases with missing data on these variables (with the exception of type of housing), excluding them from the construction of the SES index would result in too small a sample for analysis. It was perhaps understandable that being relatively young members in their family, our respondents tended to be not too knowledgeable about all the family's socio-economic information that we required. Fortunately, we discovered that, by crosstabulating the four variables two at a time, there were a substantial number of cases that had non-missing values on one variable. After examining the data, a scheme of assigning "suitable" values for missing cases on a given variable was drawn up. Essentially, missing cases on income were assigned values on the basis of known values on father's occupation, and vice versa. Missing cases on father's education were assigned values if values on father's occupation were known. In this way, the total number of cases with missing data for the SES index was reduced to only 76. These were cases whose housing type was unidentifiable or whose father was probably deceased.

The correlations among the four variables and their correlations with the composite SES index are shown in Table A. Also shown are the correlations between each variable and the SES index score computed from the other three variables in the set (adjusted item-total correlation). All these correlations were significant beyond the .01 level. Thus the composite SES index can be taken to be reasonably valid. Cronbach's alpha for this index was 0.63.

The SES index scores ranged from 5 to 26, with a mean of 11.67 and a standard deviation of 3.76. For purposes of our analyses, three categories of SES scores were used:

| SES    | Score | % of cases     |
|--------|-------|----------------|
| Low    | 5- 9  | 30.1           |
| Medium | 10-14 | 50.3           |
| High   | 15-26 | 19.6           |
|        |       | 100.0 (N=1327) |

Table A. Item-item and item-total correlation coefficients\* of the SES index

|                     | Family income | Father's education | Housing type | SES index | Adjusted SES index |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Father's occupation | .525          | .271               | .285         | .810      | .538               |
| Family income       |               | .192               | .230         | .756      | .471               |
| Father's education  |               |                    | .259         | .600      | .309               |
| Housing type        |               |                    |              | .552      | .343               |

\* All correlations significant,  $p < 0.01$

Table 4. Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities by Age

| Leisure Activity         | Age   |       |            |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|------------|
|                          | 11-13 | 14-15 | 16 & older |
|                          | %     | %     | %          |
| Television               | 35.2  | 31.6  | 29.7       |
| Other mass media         |       |       |            |
| Radio/records            | 4.3   | 8.2   | 11.1       |
| Movies                   | 4.6   | 3.5   | 3.6        |
| Books                    | 8.9   | 7.3   | 10.7       |
| Newspapers/magazines     | 1.7   | 2.1   | 4.4        |
| Sub-total                | 19.5  | 21.1  | 29.8       |
| Interest activities      |       |       |            |
| Household skills         | 2.3   | 1.4   | 2.2        |
| Art and craft            | 3.1   | 3.3   | 1.2        |
| Performing arts          | 1.4   | 2.1   | 2.0        |
| Sub-total                | 6.8   | 6.8   | 5.4        |
| Social activities        | 9.1   | 8.7   | 9.4        |
| Physical activities      |       |       |            |
| Ball games               | 13.7  | 13.1  | 11.5       |
| Outing and camping       | 7.1   | 9.8   | 6.0        |
| Other sports             | 3.7   | 3.3   | 3.2        |
| Sub-total                | 24.5  | 26.2  | 20.7       |
| Other leisure activities | 4.9   | 5.6   | 5.0        |
| Total                    | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0      |
| (N)                      | (350) | (427) | (502)      |

Chi-square = 36.75,  $p < 0.05$  (df = 24)

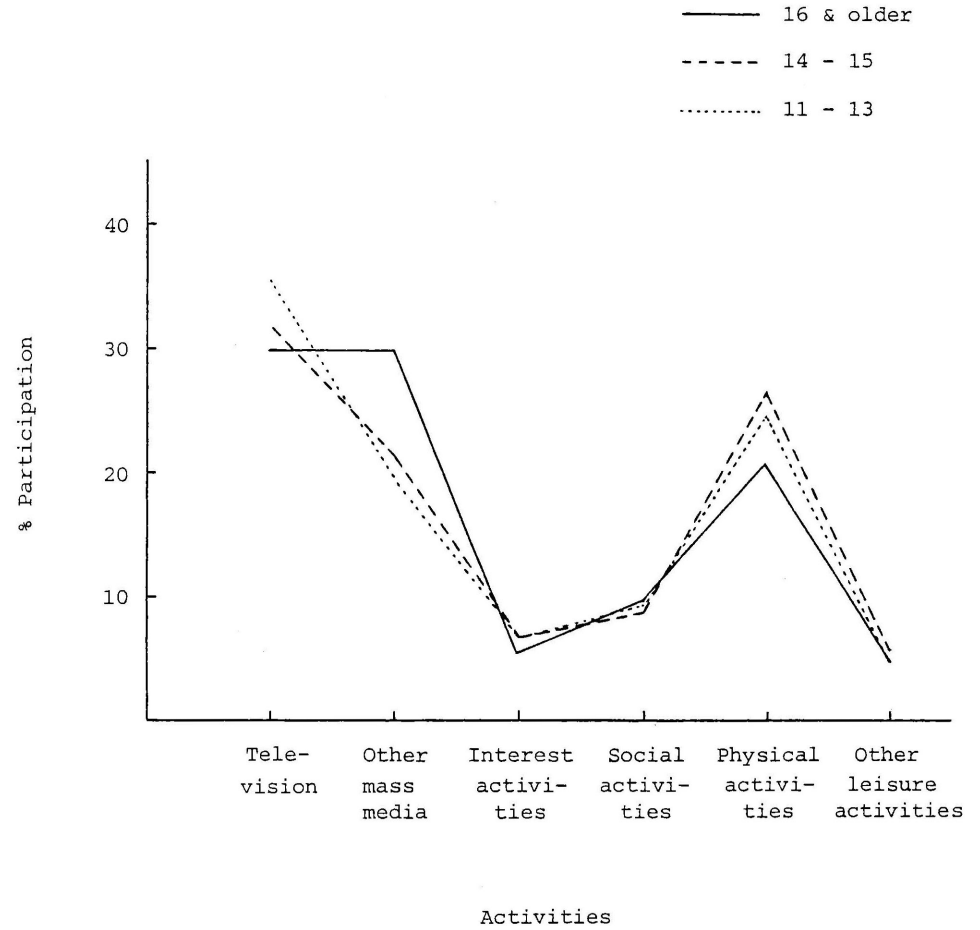


Figure 2. Profile of Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities by Age

However, it may be noted, as shown in both Table 5 and Figure 3, while the three SES profiles are quite similar in most activity types, they tend to differ most in media use. Less television watching but more use of other mass media, especially radio, records, and the print media, tends to be associated with higher SES. In the case of the print media, this seems to be reasonable considering the fact that higher SES respondents had better educated fathers and generally more favourable economic conditions.

Table 5. Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities by SES

| Leisure Activity         | S E S |        |       |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
|                          | Low   | Medium | High  |
|                          | %     | %      | %     |
| Television               | 34.8  | 32.5   | 25.5  |
| Other mass media         |       |        |       |
| Radio/records            | 7.0   | 8.2    | 9.9   |
| Movies                   | 3.9   | 3.4    | 5.4   |
| Books                    | 7.2   | 8.7    | 11.9  |
| Newspapers/magazines     | 2.2   | 3.1    | 3.3   |
| Sub-total                | 20.3  | 23.4   | 30.5  |
| Interest activities      |       |        |       |
| Household skills         | 1.9   | 2.3    | 1.2   |
| Art and craft            | 3.1   | 2.1    | 2.5   |
| Performing arts          | 0.6   | 2.4    | 2.9   |
| Sub-total                | 5.6   | 6.8    | 6.6   |
| Social activities        | 9.8   | 8.8    | 7.4   |
| Physical activities      |       |        |       |
| Ball games               | 12.0  | 12.7   | 14.8  |
| Outing and camping       | 7.8   | 7.5    | 7.0   |
| Other sports             | 3.9   | 3.6    | 2.9   |
| Sub-total                | 23.7  | 23.8   | 24.7  |
| Other leisure activities | 5.8   | 4.7    | 5.3   |
| Total                    | 100.0 | 100.0  | 100.0 |
| (N)                      | (359) | (613)  | (243) |

Chi-square = 21.83, n.s. (df = 24)

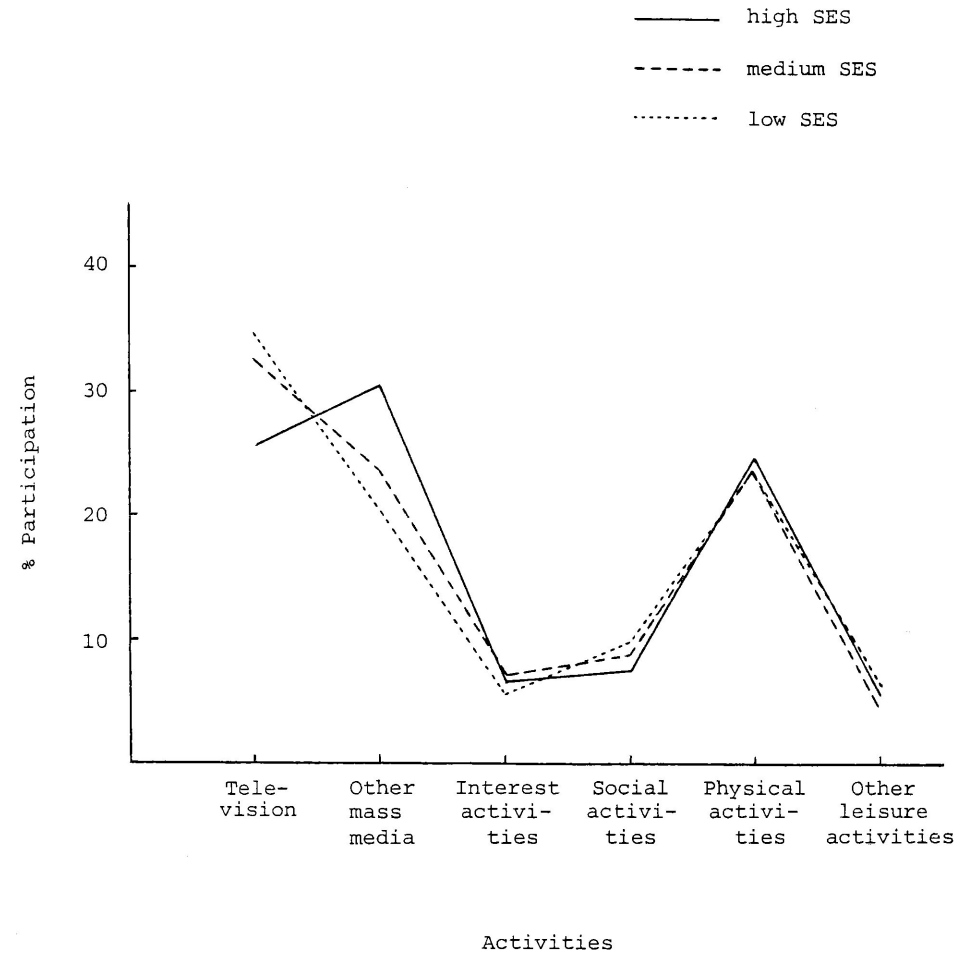


Figure 3. Profile of Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities by SES

Another way to examine the profiles of leisure activity participation in a summary way is to compare the degree of variation in the distribution of leisure activity types among the different groups of respondents classified according to age and socio-economic status. The Index of Qualitative Variation (IQV) was selected to indicate this. The index, varying between 0 and 1, is computed on the basis of counting differences in attribute among cases as used by Mueller, Schuessler, and Costner (1977). The results are shown in Tables 6 and 7. Variation in leisure activity participation was found to be greater with increasing age in the adolescent years, and with higher SES. In other words, the older adolescents and those from higher social class families, collectively speaking, tend to participate in a larger variety of leisure activities. Such tendency is somewhat more noticeable for boys than for girls.

Table 6. Index of Qualitative Variation\* of Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities by Age by Sex

| Sex    | Age   |       |            |
|--------|-------|-------|------------|
|        | 11-13 | 14-15 | 16 & older |
| Male   | 0.89  | 0.93  | 0.94       |
| Female | 0.89  | 0.87  | 0.90       |

\* See John H. Mueller, Karl F. Schuessler, and Herbert L. Costner, Statistical Reasoning in Sociology, 3rd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), pp. 175-177.

Table 7. Index of Qualitative Variation of Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activities by SES by Sex

| Sex    | S E S |        |      |
|--------|-------|--------|------|
|        | Low   | Medium | High |
| Male   | 0.91  | 0.92   | 0.96 |
| Female | 0.87  | 0.89   | 0.91 |

Is it the case that as adolescents grow older, more diversified interests are likely to emerge? Do higher SES families somehow encourage or facilitate more alternative leisure pursuits? It may be a matter of affordability or values or both. These questions need to be further studied in future research.

Joint Influence of Age and SES on Leisure Activities

From the profiles of most frequently participated leisure activities by age and by SES, it can be seen that the more conspicuous differences associated with both age and SES are in television watching and use of the other mass media. In general, we found that both increasing age and higher family SES were associated with less television watching but more use of the other mass media. What would be the joint effect of age and SES? To conserve space, we shall examine such joint effect on television watching and book reading only. The results are shown in Tables 8 and 9.

Television-watching Inspection of the figures in Table 8 shows that there is a general tendency for television watching to decline with higher family SES for each age group, and with increasing age within each family

Table 8. Percent Mentioning TV watching as Most Frequent Leisure Activity  
by Family SES, Age, and Sex

| Family<br>SES | Male          |               |               |               |               | Female        |               |               |  |  |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|--|
|               | A g e         |               |               |               |               | A g e         |               |               |  |  |
|               | 11-13         | 14-15         | 16+           | All           | 11-13         | 14-15         | 16+           | All           |  |  |
| High          | 27.9<br>(43)  | 15.4<br>(26)  | 17.7<br>(62)  | 20.6<br>(131) | 25.0<br>(28)  | 30.0<br>(30)  | 35.2<br>(54)  | 31.3<br>(112) |  |  |
| Medium        | 37.5<br>(72)  | 24.8<br>(105) | 25.2<br>(135) | 27.9<br>(312) | 39.2<br>(74)  | 41.4<br>(116) | 31.5<br>(111) | 37.2<br>(301) |  |  |
| Low           | 35.2<br>(54)  | 23.8<br>(63)  | 31.7<br>(63)  | 30.0<br>(180) | 39.1<br>(64)  | 40.6<br>(69)  | 39.1<br>(46)  | 39.7<br>(179) |  |  |
| All           | 34.3<br>(169) | 23.2<br>(194) | 25.0<br>(260) | 27.0<br>(623) | 36.7<br>(166) | 39.5<br>(215) | 34.1<br>(211) | 36.8<br>(592) |  |  |

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Table 9. Percent Mentioning Book Reading as Most Frequent Leisure Activity  
by Family SES, Age, and Sex\*

| Family<br>SES | Male  |       |      |      |       | Female |     |     |  |  |
|---------------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|--------|-----|-----|--|--|
|               | A g e |       |      |      |       | A g e  |     |     |  |  |
|               | 11-13 | 14-15 | 16+  | All  | 11-13 | 14-15  | 16+ | All |  |  |
| High          | 9.3   | 15.4  | 16.1 | 13.7 | 7.1   | 13.3   | 9.3 | 9.8 |  |  |
| Medium        | 5.6   | 8.6   | 11.9 | 9.3  | 9.5   | 6.0    | 9.0 | 8.0 |  |  |
| Low           | 7.4   | 6.3   | 7.9  | 7.2  | 14.1  | 4.3    | 2.2 | 7.3 |  |  |
| All           | 7.1   | 8.8   | 11.9 | 9.6  | 10.8  | 6.5    | 7.6 | 8.1 |  |  |

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\*Base Ns for the percentages are the same as in Table 8.

SES group. However, this pattern is less clear among girls. In fact, the effect of age shows a reversal among girls from high SES families. That is, older girls tend to watch more television. For boys, the association of increasing age with less television watching is more evident among the medium and high SES groups although in all three SES groups the older boys actually claimed somewhat more television watching than the 14- and 15-year-olds. For both boys and girls (but more for boys than for girls), nevertheless, as a result of interaction of the influences of both age and SES, the relatively heavy television watchers are likely to be found among the younger students who are also from medium and low SES families.

Book-reading From Table 9, we may first note that while higher family SES is associated with more book reading for both boys and girls, increasing age is associated with more book reading for boys but not for girls. In noting this, we have to note also that the extent of book reading as a most frequently participated leisure activity is much less than that of television watching for any given age or SES group. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see that the joint influence of age and SES is such that the highest rate of book reading for boys is found among the 16-plus age group who are also from high SES families (16 per cent). Besides, the effect of SES on book reading for girls varies according to age, as a closer examination of Table 9 reveals. Thus, among the 11-13 age group, lower family SES is associated with book reading. For the older girls, however, higher family SES seems to be more conducive to book reading.

Not shown in tables is the joint influence of age and SES on listening to radio and records. In this case, there is a rather clear tendency for the older adolescents who are also from higher SES families to be more inclined

towards listening to radio and records. Also not shown is reading of newspapers and magazines. Here, the number of cases selecting this form of print media as leisure activity are too few in many of the age-SES sub-groups so that the joint influence of age and SES is not easily discernable. However, it seems that age is a more important variable: the older youngsters read more, regardless of SES.

What general conclusion concerning the joint influence of age and SES on mass media-related leisure activities may we draw? We saw earlier, from leisure activity profiles by age and by SES, that the most conspicuous differences are in the area of mass media use: increasing age and higher SES each is associated with less television watching but more use of the other media. The data on joint influence indicated that, although not without exceptions, older age coupled with higher SES would reinforce such an association, i.e., even less television watching and more exposure to the other media.

#### Multifarious Nature of Leisure Activities: Most Frequent and Most Liked Activities Compared

Our analysis so far has focussed on the most frequently participated leisure activities. However, the significance of examining behaviour in largely descriptive terms is limited unless we also attempt to study the meaning the behaviour may have for the actor. An attempt in this direction is made possible by considering our respondents' "most liked" leisure activities. Using the same list of types of leisure activities from which our respondents were asked to indicate their most frequently participated leisure activities during the previous month, we asked them to name the types of

leisure activities they liked most regardless of whether they had actually engaged in them during the previous month. Actual behaviour is often a result of many situational factors and thus what is most frequently performed may not necessarily be most gratifying. Likewise, what is less frequently or even rarely performed may be quite rewarding.

To see the relationship between actual behaviour and gratification more clearly, we crosstabulated the responses to the most frequently participated leisure activity against those to the most liked leisure activity. In both dimensions, only the highest ranked activity was included. It was then possible to do two sets of computations: (1) the degree of congruence between the most frequent and the most liked in leisure activity, and (2) the variability of the most liked leisure activity given the most frequent activity. The first set of analyses would indicate which type of leisure activity tends to be most satisfying while the second would suggest how diversified the adolescents' leisure interests tend to be given knowledge of their most frequent leisure participation.

Congruence between the most frequent and the most liked The crosstabulation between the most frequent and the most liked leisure activities is not shown, but the results derived from that tabulation concerning the congruence between the most frequent and the most liked in leisure activity are shown in Table 10. The percentages are those who mentioned activity X as most liked among all those whose most frequently participated leisure activity was also X. If we call such percentages "congruence rates" for short, then a high congruence rate for a given type of leisure activity may be taken to mean that participation in that activity is more likely to bring about satisfaction.

Table 10. "Congruence Rates"<sup>a</sup> of Different Types of Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activity by Sex

| Leisure Activity    | Sex                        |               |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
|                     | Male                       | Female        |
| Television          | 14.0<br>(172) <sup>b</sup> | 13.0<br>(231) |
| Other Mass Media    | 43.8<br>(146)              | 50.0<br>(160) |
| Interest Activities | 80.0<br>(35)               | 52.3<br>(44)  |
| Social Activities   | 45.5<br>(44)               | 23.9<br>(71)  |
| Physical Activities | 64.2<br>(204)              | 46.4<br>(97)  |
| All Activities      | 50.1 <sup>c</sup><br>(601) | 42.5<br>(603) |

<sup>a</sup> "Congruence rate" refers to the percentage of respondents who mentioned activity X as most liked among all those whose most frequently participated leisure activity was also X. However, if X was "other activities," a congruence rate would be undefined in meaning and thus was not calculated.

<sup>b</sup> Base number for percentage.

<sup>c</sup> In calculating the congruence rate for all activities, television and other mass media were treated as one large group. Thus, the numerator used for calculating the overall congruence rate is somewhat larger than what may be derived from the specific rates listed for the different types of activity. The denominator, however, equals the sum of the denominators of the specific rates.

Computing congruence rates for the various types of leisure activity separately for boys and for girls revealed an interesting pattern. First, if we consider just television watching, the congruence rate is very low and about the same for both boys (14 per cent) and girls (13 per cent). For the other mass media as a group, the congruence rate among girls is somewhat higher (50 per cent) than among boys (44 per cent). Second, in all the other types of leisure activity, especially in interest activities, boys apparently boast a higher congruence rate. It means that in these areas of leisure participation, boys' satisfaction tends to be more concentrated around the most frequently participated activity rather than diffused over a variety of other activities.

Variation in the most liked leisure activity given the most frequent activity In calculating the "congruence rates" above, the focus of attention was the varying degrees to which a given most frequently participated leisure activity is gratifying, collectively speaking. If this degree is low, it would suggest that there is perhaps considerable variation in the respondents' assessment of which type of activity is most gratifying. From the same crosstabulation of most frequently participated and most liked types of leisure activity used above, we calculated, within each group of respondents mentioning a given most frequently participated leisure activity, the index of qualitative variation (IQV) that will reflect the degree of variation in the responses of the most liked leisure activity. The results, shown in Table 11, may be described as follows:

Table 11. Index of Qualitative Variation\* of Most Liked Leisure Activity by Sex for Given Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activity

| Most Frequently Participated Leisure Activity | Sex  |        |
|---|------|--------|
|   | Male | Female |
| Television                                    | 0.95 | 0.93   |
| Other Mass Media                              | 0.91 | 0.85   |
| Interest Activities                           | 0.24 | 0.79   |
| Social Activities                             | 0.80 | 0.92   |
| Physical Activities                           | 0.82 | 0.88   |

\*See footnote of Table 6.

(1) If television watching is the most frequently participated leisure activity, the adolescents' choice of the most satisfying leisure activity will most likely be highly diverse (IQV=0.95 for boys and 0.93 for girls).

(2) Boys' choice of the most liked leisure activity is more diverse than girls' if use of the mass media other than television is the most frequently participated leisure activity (IQV=0.91 for boys and 0.85 for girls).

(3) If the most frequent leisure pursuit is of the other types (interest activities, social activities, and physical activities), girls demonstrate greater variation in the choice of the most satisfying leisure activity.

Thus, these differences indicate that different leisure pursuits seem to carry with them different experiences that may be associated with certain life styles, and that the two sexes during the adolescent years do not behave the same way in obtaining satisfaction from their leisure experiences.



### The Multifarious Nature of Leisure Activities: Companions

The multifarious nature of leisure activities can be seen not only in terms of the degree of congruence between frequency of actual participation and gratification obtained, but also in terms of the variation in the companionship among different types of leisure activity. As Rapoport and Rapoport (1975) have stressed, adolescence is associated with a great variety of interests--e.g., novelty, variety, solitude, close relationships outside the family--which serve to facilitate the process of searching for an identity. The pursuit of interests is typically expressed in the form of leisure activities in which personal relationships may be established with others who share common interests. This, in the words of Fischer (1982), is also a manifestation of "involvement in subcultures." Although our data from the survey were not sufficient for a study of adolescent subcultures, an analysis of the patterns of leisure companionship is possible and should shed some light on the social networks in which the leisure life of adolescents takes place.

In addition to answering what their most frequently participated and most liked leisure activities were, our respondents were also asked to indicate whether in the previous month they had taken part in each of a list of given leisure activities, and if so whether they did so alone or with some other persons. The types of leisure companions used for such response included: parents, brothers and sisters, relatives, schoolmates, friends, and neighbours. Single or multiple responses were allowed. For our present analysis, these have been grouped into only three categories: "family" (parents, siblings, and relatives, in any combination), "friends and schoolmates only," and "mixed" (any combination of family, friends and schoolmates,

siblings, and neighbours). The distribution of leisure companionship for each type of leisure activity is given in Table 12.

Examining Table 12, we can see that different types of leisure activity tend to be associated with different patterns of companionship. Specifically, we may note the following:

(1) Television watching is primarily a family or household activity as nearly three-quarters of those who mentioned television as one of their leisure activities replied that they watched it with family members or relatives.

(2) Listening to the radio or records, reading books, and especially reading newspapers or magazines are much more likely than television watching to be engaged in alone, although radio or records are generally just as likely to be a family activity, and book-reading is somewhat likely to be shared with friends and schoolmates.

(3) Going to the movies is more likely to be a peer group activity than a family activity as 54 per cent of those who had gone to the movies during the previous month did so with friends or schoolmates. Only 23 per cent watched movies with family members.

(4) In the category of interest activities, the general pattern of companionship tends to centre on first, being alone, and second, friends and schoolmates. However, art and craft are more likely to be engaged in alone while household skills (cooking, flower arrangement, and knitting) tend to be taken up with more variation in companionship.

(5) Social activities generally involve a great variety of companionship. Going out and visiting tea-houses are, as may be expected, more likely to be a family activity although the proportion of "mixed" companionship (nearly a quarter) is much higher than in all other leisure activities.

Table 12. Leisure Companions by Leisure Activity<sup>a</sup>

| Leisure Activity  | Leisure Companions |        |                         |       | Total (N) <sup>b</sup> |
|---|--------------------|--------|-------------------------|-------|------------------------|
|   | Alone              | Family | Friends and Schoolmates | Mixed |                        |
| <u>Mass Media</u>   |                    |        |                         |       |                        |
| Television  | 12.0               | 74.4   | 3.4                     | 10.0  | 100.0 (1338)           |
| Radio/records   | 46.9               | 43.1   | 3.7                     | 6.3   | 100.0 (1232)           |
| Movies  | 5.0                | 22.8   | 53.6                    | 18.6  | 100.0 ( 854)           |
| Books   | 60.8               | 8.7    | 23.2                    | 7.2   | 100.0 ( 931)           |
| Newspapers/magazines  | 73.0               | 19.9   | 3.2                     | 3.8   | 100.0 (1239)           |
| <u>Interest Activities</u>                                  |                    |        |                         |       |                        |
| Household skills  | 38.1               | 29.7   | 22.0                    | 10.2  | 100.0 ( 373)           |
| Craft   | 54.4               | 16.1   | 22.4                    | 7.1   | 100.0 ( 559)           |
| Art   | 64.1               | 6.0    | 26.4                    | 3.5   | 100.0 ( 565)           |
| Performing arts   | 43.6               | 10.4   | 38.2                    | 7.8   | 100.0 ( 498)           |
| Prose reading   | 37.2               | 8.2    | 46.5                    | 8.1   | 100.0 ( 86)            |
| <u>Social Activities</u>                                    |                    |        |                         |       |                        |
| Social Activities A<br>(Going out & visiting<br>tea-houses) | 2.0                | 43.5   | 30.0                    | 24.6  | 100.0 (1144)           |
| Social Activities B<br>(Electronic games)                   | 26.4               | 21.3   | 39.5                    | 12.9  | 100.0 ( 626)           |
| <u>Physical Activities</u>                                  |                    |        |                         |       |                        |
| Ball games  | 1.5                | 9.1    | 73.0                    | 16.4  | 100.0 ( 921)           |
| Outing and camping  | 1.0                | 10.6   | 73.7                    | 14.7  | 100.0 ( 714)           |
| Other sports A<br>(athletics, swimming,<br>callisthenics)   | 9.5                | 8.1    | 66.5                    | 16.0  | 100.0 ( 644)           |
| Other sports B<br>(martial arts)                            | 30.8               | 12.8   | 49.6                    | 6.9   | 100.0 ( 117)           |
| Other Activities  | 19.4               | 17.2   | 45.8                    | 17.6  | 100.0 ( 273)           |

<sup>a</sup>In earlier tables, certain activities were combined (art and craft, performing arts and prose reading, social activities A and B, other sports A and B). In this table, they have to be treated separately because information on companions was asked separately for each type of leisure activity listed in the survey questionnaire.

<sup>b</sup>The base Ns are the number of respondents who said they had participated in a given type of leisure activity during the previous month. Percentages sometimes do not total to 100.0 owing to rounding errors.

In the case of electronic games, an emerging fad among young people nowadays, 40 per cent of those who participated did so with friends and schoolmates.

(6) In the area of physical activities, the dominant type of companions is clearly friends and schoolmates. This is strongest in ball games and outdoor activities: as many as 73 or 74 per cent of the respondents who had such leisure pursuits in the past month shared the experience with their peers.

Although not shown in Table 12, we also analyzed the distribution of leisure companions by sex and found a rather interesting pattern. Boys are more likely than girls to participate in leisure activities alone or in the company of friends and schoolmates, while girls are inclined to associate with family members or to have mixed combinations of companions in their leisure pursuits. This pattern is true of nearly all the types of leisure activity that are of concern to us.

From these findings, we see that leisure activities are generally associated with a variety of companions. This association differs according to both the type of activity and the gender of the adolescent. That is, the nature of the activity--whether it is primarily more suitable for individual or group participation, for instance--and certain characteristics of sex-roles during the period of adolescence are important factors that should be taken into consideration in trying to understand the patterning of adolescents' use of leisure. Indeed, it should not be surprising to find that the family and the youth peer group exert a substantial influence upon their leisure behaviour.

### Summary and Discussion

Let us recapitulate in general terms the findings presented so far. In doing so, it is to be noted that the purpose of this paper has been to identify the patterns of leisure activities of young people in schools which will serve as a basis for further research into the role of leisure in the social life of adolescents.

Using a precoded list of leisure activities, we found that television watching was by far the most common leisure activity in the sense that it was mentioned by a sizeable proportion (nearly one-third) of our respondents as the most frequently participated leisure activity. The next five most commonly mentioned types of leisure activity are: socializing (going out and visiting tea-houses), ball games, listening to the radio or records, book reading, and outdoor pleasures. In terms of broader categories of leisure activity, exposure to one form or another of mass media accounted for 55 per cent of the respondents while participation in physical activities accounted for 24 per cent.

Our analysis proceeded to differences in leisure patterns according to sex, age, and family SES. These variables were selected because they are generally considered relevant for understanding variations in behaviour. They are also the major social and demographical factors constituting contexts in which socialization takes place, both in the family and in the peer group subculture. Leisure activities may well serve as avenues of maintaining and developing social ties with significant others through which behaviour corresponding to certain sex-age roles may be learned. Leisure activities may also serve as a medium of expression of values and the self which is likely to be conditioned by social class status.

We found that sex is an important variable that points to statistically significant differences in leisure activities. For example, while exposure to the mass media was generally the most common category of leisure participation, girls were clearly more frequent television viewers and radio listeners than boys. Girls were more interested in household skills and social activities, but boys were, as may be expected, much more drawn towards the various physical activities, especially ball games. This pattern agrees with the findings of a number of other studies on youth (e.g., Emmett, 1971; Hendry, 1983; Poole, 1983), including a recent Hong Kong survey on primary and secondary school youths conducted by the Hong Kong Boys and Girls Clubs Association in 1979. Sex-role identity being very important in adolescence, the learning and acquisition of sex roles apparently are well reflected in patterns of leisure activities.

Variations in leisure activities by age were also found to be statistically significant. Increasing age was associated with (a) less television watching--especially among boys--but generally more use of other mass media, and (b) somewhat less frequent pursuit of interest activities and physical activities. This may be attributable to the heavier study load of pupils in the upper school forms. It may also reflect the relative lack of social "freedom" of girls as compared with boys so that girls tend to spend more time at home. Insofar as parents are more permissive towards boys, the latter tend to have more leisure alternatives. When the data for males and females were examined separately, we found that, in the course of progressing into the later teens, boys as a group actually demonstrated a somewhat greater degree of variation in the diversity of leisure activities participated.

When the respondents were grouped according to family SES, differences in leisure use were not statistically significant. Nevertheless, differences appeared quite substantial in the domain of use of mass media. Adolescents from higher status families tended to watch less television but to consume more of the other media, such as book reading and listening to the radio or records. This is basically consistent with other research findings concerning social class differences and media use (e.g., Young and Willmott, 1973; Katz and Gurevitch, 1976; Robinson, 1977; Poole, 1983). Other than this, we found little difference in participation in other leisure activities across the three SES groups, although we did find that the degree of variation in leisure activities (as measured by the Index of Qualitative Variation) was somewhat higher with ascending family SES. This was true both for males and for females. This could be taken to mean that higher social status families are probably more likely to provide opportunities and facilities that encourage a more diversified use of leisure. These families are also probably more likely to transmit to the younger generation values that are conducive to a more variegated life style. Unfortunately, our data were not sufficient for testing this proposition. Further research into the factors associated with social class differences in leisure is certainly needed.

Next, the joint influence of age and family SES was examined for a few selected leisure activities. The combination of higher family SES and late adolescence was found to be accompanied by relatively high participation rates in radio or record listening and book reading but low participation rates in television viewing. Such a pattern was more evident among the boys.

The analysis of the joint effect of age and family SES was not carried out for all the types of leisure activities mentioned in this study. This would

have taken up much more space than acceptable in this monograph. Besides, the relatively small numbers of participants in certain activities as a result of the finer cross crosstabulation would make a meaningful description of patterns of effect somewhat risky. However, the few findings we obtained suggest that: (a) age and family SES may interact to produce higher participation rates in some leisure activities but lower in others, and (b) this interaction effect may be different for males as against females.

Leisure activities are multifarious: they occur in great variety and can conceivably offer varying degrees of gratification to participants. By comparing responses to "most liked" and those to "most frequent" leisure activities, it is possible for us to see which type of leisure activity tends to be most satisfying and the degree of diversity of "most liked" activities for each type of "most frequent" leisure activity. Using "congruence rates," we found that interest activities were most satisfying, followed by physical activities. Does this suggest anything about the dispositions and pre-occupations of adolescents in their stage of growth and development? It does seem that this lends support to the argument that teenagers have a strong need for activity and tend to enjoy learning and doing things that promote a sense of involvement and achievement. Where a certain type of frequently participated activity was highly satisfying, there was less variation in the "most liked" activities that were mentioned.

It is interesting to note that television watching was by far the least satisfying. While it was most commonly mentioned as the most frequently participated leisure activity, it was at the same time least mentioned as the "most liked." Consequently, those who were frequent television viewers in our sample reported the greatest diversity of most liked leisure activities.

Leisure activities are also multifarious in the sense that they vary in the type of companionship that generally occurs. We found that some activities, such as watching television and going out to tea-houses, are more likely to be family-oriented. Others, such as going to the movies and various physical activities, are typically group activities involving friends and schoolmates. Still others, such as reading and art and craft, by contrast, are essentially though by no means exclusively "solitary" activities. There are also sex differences which indicated that the tendency to participate in a leisure activity alone or with peers is stronger among boys while participation with family members is more prevalent among girls. All these findings confirm one observation: leisure behaviour often takes place in some kind of social network. The meaning of leisure may be better understood if we attempt to relate it to the broader social network to which it actually contribute.

Thus, we have examined the basic patterns of leisure behaviour of secondary school young people. There is considerable variation in the types of activity engaged in which serves to indicate in part the life style of the young in their stage of development. Sex and age have been found to be important variables that should be taken into consideration in any effort to study variations in leisure behaviour. They certainly are among the key differentiating variables that would enable us to identify and characterize patterns of adolescent subcultures. Indications are that preoccupations and interests tend to be tied closely with gender and age. Insofar as leisure activities are a major avenue for the expression, manipulation, and development of preoccupations and interests (which in turn are vital for identity formation), sex and age variations in leisure use deserve careful attention. Moreover,

the variations are made more complex when social class is also considered. Some interaction effects appear to be rather interesting and may add useful information to our understanding of adolescent subcultures. Although our data did not permit us to study these subcultures in any further detail, our preliminary look into the variations in leisure companionship suggests that much interesting and important ground in this direction will need to be explored.

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## 香港青少年閒暇行爲的基本模式

(中文摘要)

本文是一份有關本港在學青少年閒暇行爲形態的初步研究報告。閒暇活動不但對青少年的成長過程十分重要，而且對他們學習在社會所應扮演的角色亦有一定的意義。

本研究蒐集了參與閒暇活動的頻數，總體的特徵和變化的資料，從而嘗試辨認本港青少年閒暇行爲的形態，及其與性別、年齡和家庭社會經濟地位的關係。資料來自一項在1983年進行的對本港1,403名中學生的調查。

爲方便分析，閒暇活動概括地分爲四大類：(a)大眾傳播媒介之使用、(b)興趣活動、(c)社交活動和(d)體育活動。資料顯示，觀看電視乃青少年中最普遍的閒暇活動。其他最常被青少年提及的活動依次包括：社交、球類活動、聽收音機或唱機、閱讀課外書和戶外活動。

從性別、年齡和家庭的社會經濟地位分析青少年的閒暇行爲，得到以下結果：

(1)性別與青少年參與的閒暇活動有很大的關係。例如，女孩子對社交活動和有關家務的活動興趣較大，但男孩子則較喜愛體育活動，特別是球類。青少年學習和獲得性別角色的過程，在他們參與的閒暇活動中，可見一斑。

(2)年齡對青少年閒暇行爲的影響也很大。年紀較長者觀看電視和參與體育活動較小而使用其他大眾傳播媒介較多。不過，可能由於家庭給予男孩子的自由較多，較年長的男孩子比同年齡的女孩子參加的閒暇活動花樣多一些。

(3)家庭的社會經濟地位本身對青少年的閒暇行爲影響不大。雖然家境較佳者的閒暇活動趨向多樣化，但基本上不同家庭背景的青少年所參與的閒暇活動分別不大。

(4)本研究亦分析了年齡和家庭社會經濟地位對一部份閒暇活動的聯同影響。舉例說，家境較佳和年紀較大者聽收音機或唱機較多，而較少觀看電視。這一點在男孩子中更爲明顯。

此外，本研究比較了青少年「最常參與的」和「最喜歡的」閒暇活動，發現青少年——特別是男孩子——對興趣活動的喜愛程度最高，其次是體育活動。有趣的是，看重視雖然最爲普遍，卻是青少年認爲最不满意的閒暇活動。

最後，有關各類型的閒暇活動與閒暇伴侶的資料顯示兩者有一定的關係。舉例來說，看電視通常是與家人一起的，看電視一般是與友儕一起的，而看課外書

或報章則較多為獨自進行的。

綜合以上各分析，可見閒暇活動基本上是在一些社群網(如家庭，友儕群體)中進行的。若能對這些社群網與閒暇活動之間的關係作進一步的研究，我們對閒暇活動的認識當會更為深入。

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(Occasional Papers No. 4)

中文摘要勘誤表

第十四行 「可見一斑」應為「可見一斑」

第十六行 「活動較小」應為「活動較少」

第二十八行 「看電視一般是與友儕一起的」應為「看電影一般是與友儕一起的」