

Serious Leisure: A Perspective For Our Time - Robert A. Stebbins

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Serious Leisure offers a comprehensive view and analysis of the current state of the sociology of leisure. Defining and differentiating the way people use their free time, Stebbins divides such activity into categories of serious, casual, and project-based leisure that he further separates into a variety of types and subtypes. Together they comprise what he calls "serious leisure." In this perspective, serious leisure constitutes systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial and interesting in nature and requiring special skills, knowledge, and experience. Casual leisure, though immediately, intrinsically rewarding, is by contrast a relatively short-lived pleasurable activity, requiring little or no special training to enjoy it. Project-based leisure is a short-term, reasonably complicated, occasional creative undertaking carried out in free time. Stebbins sets out the basic concepts and propositions that make up the three forms, focusing on their essential elements. He takes stock of the serious leisure literature as well as that for casual and project-based leisure. Stebbins sees "serious leisure" realized by way of a set of foundational concepts--organization, community, history, lifestyle, and culture--and several of their component areas. He reviews the history and background of the concept of serious leisure and then adds historical commentary on, first, casual leisure and, then, project-based leisure. Finally, he examines the future and the importance of the serious leisure perspective in a globalizing world, and some of its critical links with other fields of knowledge and practice, notably the nonprofit sector and preventive medicine. Together with its original insights, *Serious Leisure* offers a single, handy, coherent, comprehensive resource. It will be of interest to sociologists, labor studies specialists, and economists.

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