

TRENDS, FORMS AND PREFERENCES OF BULGARIANS IN THEIR LEISURE ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The study of time budgets is primarily a study of the every day activities of different layers of society. It is an opportunity to record and analyze the actions of people in the field of work, holiday, education and leisure time with the help of indicators for the distribution of time. These actions are reflected in their set, duration, frequency, periodicity, localization in the area and other characteristics. For the purposes of this study, it will be discussed the results of a research of the forms, preferences and trends of Bulgarians in their leisure time as part of social time.

Keywords: *time; free time; social time; time structure*

JEL Codes: *A14, J17*

Introduction

Time - this concept measures almost every process in the world around us, expressing the duration and the sequence of all things. Time is continuous, inherent in nature as a whole, but at the same time each specific form of matter is limited and transitory in time. Time is also measured by the life of the individual and human society as a whole. (Picha, Bestuzhev-Lada, Dimov et al., 1990. p. 8-9)

Time is the attribute of everything material, including social space and the people who inhabit it. It is described through the movement of the material objects and their condition.

The essence of time from a point of view of dialectical materialism is expressed as "The essential form of every way of life is the essence of space and time." (Marx., Engels. 1969. p. 221)

Defining time, as an universal form of existence of moving matter get the conclusion about the existence of physical, biological and social time.

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Statement of the problem

Social time is structured as using social objects and their states. It is measured with the help of a scale for social practices. Social space is the order of arranging the social positions and the social time is the order of their rotations. Therefore, the social time is the sequence of actions of people, their groups and institutions. The unit of social time is an interval that coincident with a unit of some kind of activity. The rhythm of social life, according to E. Durkheim, is the basis of the category - time (Durkheim, 1915).

The structure of social time is a social structure, as it is determined by the choice of starting points, which on their part depend on perceptions of the importance of the events. The construction of social time happens on the basis of a system of values. Different values lead to the formation of different structures of social time, because it is a product of a certain social practice, perceived through a certain system of values. The main difficulty that a person faces is to mark the content and functional boundaries of the notion in the very concept of the social time of the society.

The term "free time" appeared for first time in the early 20th century, when the initial scientific and applied social-statistics study of time budgets began to develop.

Free time is one of the forms of social time or in other words, a unit for a social time. It is associated with activities such as personal self-development, mastering cultural achievements and creating cultural values. Therefore, "Free time" is a set of different activities act by people in a certain period of time.

There is no consensus among researchers on key issues related to the study of leisure time yet. There are various research approaches to this problem, whose representatives are economists, philosophers, sociologists, who consider Leisure time as a part of non-working time, but from a different point of view of its purpose.

Based on all researches, the importance of free time can be determined in the lives of individuals and the society as a whole. In this regard, free time is defined as a valuable resource for the restoration and development of human personality. Free time, on its part is a structural element of human life.

Unlike working hours, the duration of which is determined by the development of technology and the nature of public relations, overtime is the time that serves employees to meet many of their non-work, family and social obligations. Leisure, as defined by the French sociologist Geoffroy Dumasier, is "an activity free from work, family and public obligations, to which the individual give in at his own will, whether for holiday, entertainment or broaden his knowledge, due to its voluntary social participation and free development of its abilities" (Kicheva-Kirova, 2005, p. 108).

Some researchers, such as A.B. Mickiewicz noted that free time is the part of non-working time that remains after doing housework and is both free time and time for other activities. Namely in free time, with its proper organization, a person regains his physical strength, prepares for productive work, realizes his creative abilities, satisfies his needs, does beauty procedures, practices sport activities. (Mickiewicz, 1989. p. 9-13)

The field of free time in research differs not only in content but also functional. The functional significance of the entertainment activity is expressed primarily in its effect, which can be shown in both material and communicative forms. The main quality that characterizes the effectiveness of free time is the level of self-consciousness and the degree of self-realization of the individual. The effect is not only a qualitative but also a quantitative characteristic of the individual's behavior and it means the emotional, cognitive and theoretical depth of the activity.

J. Dumazedier is the author of a number of works dedicated to the changes taking place in modern society, revealing the problems of leisure time among many other things. He looks at the leisure time as "a set of activities to which one can devote oneself in good faith to rest, have fun, develop one's knowledge or education, ... free from professional, family and social obligations." (Dumazedier, 1982, p. 29)

This view is shared by M. Kaplan, who, defining the essence of free time, also speaks of "dedication to the values of culture" (Kaplan, 1960. p. 24). A. Schopenhauer, called free time the crown of human existence, because only this position makes man a full owner of his "I" (Schopenhauer, 1990, p. 195)

For example, B.A. Grushin believes that free time is only "part of the extra time that a person has left for various types of fixed duties" (A short dictionary of sociology: a reference edition, 1989, p. 299).

In short sociological dictionary writes that an essential feature that indicates the availability of free time is its "cleansing" of all fixed, necessary duties (A short dictionary of sociology: a reference edition, 1989, p. 299).

In order to identify the nature and the structure of the free time, it is necessary to consider it as one of the forms of human life. In this case, it is necessary to analyze all forms of human activity, as they interact with each other.

There are many changes in the content of leisure time under the influence of the rapid development of social infrastructure and mass media. The new technologies determine both stability and mobility, variability of the content and forms of activity in modern leisure time.

The variety of forms of leisure time, their mutual interaction are the most important characteristics of how wide is the range of interests in the field of leisure time for the population.

The modern entertainment activity from the content point of view is represented by various forms of entertainment activities, which are units of the logical typology of leisure time. They are understood as a set of actions from one and the same type that have a certain functional load.

All these forms of leisure activities are used in different ways by different social participants. A specific way of interconnection of these forms form the basis for distinguishing the types of recreational activities. The choice of this or that behavior in leisure time is determined by various factors. Each person is characterized by some personal preferences in leisure activities.

As in public life in general, there is no absolute freedom in the behavior of the individual in his free time too. "Free time ... contains the dualism of freedom and control, personal will and constraints", because both its qualitative and quantitative-temporal characteristics are strongly determined by the existing social conditions. Among them, at forefront come the technological characteristics of society.

They are the ones who determine, firstly, the real scale of free time available to society and its specific social groups: the more advanced is the technology, the lower is the time spent on production and domestic activities and therefore the public leisure resources are higher, and secondly, the real content (composition of types) of leisure time typical for a certain society.

The technological basis of mass reading, tourism, sports, watching movies and televisions, listening to radio, computer leisure time is quite obvious. The leisure time in developed countries at the beginning of the 21st century reminds insignificantly, both in its specific content and in its time opportunities to the entertainment of the population of those countries, at least a century ago or more than a thousand years ago.

At a personal level, the determining role in defining the leisure time play the social conditions, the social status of the individual, his gender, age, nationality, marital, professional, property, educational status. These status characteristics of the person to great extent determine both its content preferences, leisure time orientations, and its real leisure time resources.

As a result of survey, after processing the data in the tables, the following summaries can be made:

The empirical basis for the analysis of trends, forms and preferences of Bulgarians in their leisure time (including youth) are the data from a study conducted in two stages, in 2019 and 2022. Two age groups were studied: young people aged 16-30 and representatives of the generation of their parents aged 41-55 years (control group). The study was used to collect data on the dynamics of changes in the use of leisure time and life goals of

Bulgarians. The survey was conducted online on a quota sample in 10 settlements from different types in proportion to their population.

There has been a certain dynamics of different types of preferences for leisure time recently. Leisure preferences mean a set of certain types of leisure activities. Some types of leisure time become practically inaccessible to certain segments of the population.

An illustration of this can be the data presented in Table 1

Table 1. Forms of spending free time among the main layers of Bulgarian society, %

Leisure time	Social layers					
	Above-average level		Average level		Under average level	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
Watching TV	71,7	89,7	77,0	84,0	75,4	81,4
Reading books, magazines, newspapers	57,7	60,7	55,7	58,0	50,9	52,3
Communications with friends	52,4	65,5	44,8	55,0	39,7	50,1
Listening to music	47,6	61,2	47,7	54,6	39,4	44,0
Sport activities	21,1	20,0	9,9	11,2	2,7	3,5
Hobby and domestic activities	14,5	16,8	13,5	19,2	10,8	12,4
Self - education activities	18,7	24,5	13,9	17,2	7,3	9,6
Computer games and surf in Internet	40,5	53,1	23,3	36,3	14,8	17,9
Attend concerts, cinemas, theatres	26,5	32,9	16,8	20,0	8,8	9,2
Attend museums, exhibitions, cultural events	12,7	18,9	9,5	9,7	4,2	4,4
Visit night clubs	22,9	21,7	12,1	12,2	3,1	3,1
Visit bars and restaurants	24,7	34,3	10,0	13,5	2,9	3,3
Public and political activities	3,6	10,5	3,8	5,5	2,7	3,4
Activities outside home	28,2	19,0	20,6	15,3	3,1	2,5

Source: The data is from own research

As it can be seen from the table, some forms of leisure are accessible to almost all layers of the population (television, reading, domestic games and hobbies). The use of others (opportunities to communicate with friends, self-education, a full value cultural and social-political life) gradually decreases as they descend to the social ladder. Others are virtually inaccessible to the majority of the population. First of all, this applies to various forms of outdoor activities. The data in the table clearly show that those who are at the lower steps of the social ladder have significantly narrowed the opportunities for the use of entertainment, recreational and developmental components of recreation and leisure time.

The age factor also has a big influence on leisure time preferences. Youth activity, its unofficial status as a "moderator of trends" in the field of leisure time is indisputable and exhibit itself in clothing fashion, tourism, and music preferences. No less enthusiasm is observed in the movements for the protection of cultural and natural monuments, public initiatives and social projects, which have a huge impact on change of various aspects of public life.

It is obvious that the leisure time and social life of the younger generation are different from the leisure time and social life of the "parents" generation. The empirical basis for the analysis of trends, forms and preferences of entertainment activities of Bulgarians (including young people) are the data from a study conducted in two stages, in 2019 and 2022. Two age groups were studied: young people aged 16-30 and representatives of the generation of their parents aged 41-55 years (control group).

The study was used to collect data on the dynamics of changes in the use of leisure time and life goals of Bulgarians. The survey was conducted online on a quota sample in 10 settlements of different types, in proportion to their population.

According to the results of the study, the older generation attends theatres, museums, concerts, but less often allows themselves to go to restaurants, discos, nightclubs, unlike the younger generation who share fashion hobbies, modern music or the usage of computer. The data from an own comparative online survey conducted for the period 2019-2022 are presented in Table 2.

As the table shows, many intellectual interests are equally inherent by young people and their parents. It is especially important that active social life (interest in theatre, art exhibitions, travel, sports) is equally attractive to many Bulgarians, regardless of the age.

Table 2
Comparison of leisure preferences in the field of intellectual life of generations: young people group 16-30 years old and the generation of "parents" aged 40-55 in %

Types of entertainment activities	Position "LIKE" in %		Ranking	
	Youth 16-30 years old	Generation "parents" 40-55 years old	Youth 16-30 years old	Generation "parents" 40-55 years old
Tourism, travel	88,7	73,7	1	1
TV	78,1	35,9	2	11
Reading books Communications, magazines, newspapers	64,9	67,5	3	2
Communication with friends	62,3	17,3	4	14
Listening to music	57,8	56,8	7	5

Sport activities	55,6	42,1	9	9
Hobby and domestic activities	50,5	54,6	12	6
Self-education activities	51,3	57,9	11	4
Computer games and surfing in the Internet	53,1	36,5	10	10
Visit concerts, cinemas, theatres	57,0	60,7	8	3
Visit Museums, exhibitions, and cultural events	45,6	25,5	13	13
Night clubs	58,3	16,3	6	15
Bars, restaurants	60,0	27,6	5	12
Domestic activities	23,2	50,4	15	7
Public and political activities	19,5	44,6	14	8

Source: The data is from own research

Changes are happening in the availability of free time, and therefore in the forms of its use. The percentage of the old types of leisure time is changing and new types of leisure time are emerging, related to technological progress (for example, the widespread use of Internet technologies). Some types of free time differ not so much in form but in content (composition of read literature, addiction to television, movies, music), which is also associated with a change in the mentality of the society.

Performing a typology of entertainment activities of the population of the modern Bulgarian society, it can be built according to the principle of "pyramid", ie. expanding the types and forms of practiced recreational activities from type to type. The simplest type of leisure activity can be conditionally called "home, but recently it is expanding, including computer activities, self-education, other activities or hobbies that have a strong component of development. This allows this type of leisure activity to be called" developing “.

However, the free time of both types is limited by the purely "home" orientation of leisure activities. The social contacts of people who prefer free time at home can only be expanded through more or less regular meetings with friends or relatives, and this is becoming almost the only form of their social life outside the home. Social participation begins only when the range of leisure preferences expands through types of recreation, entertainment, political or other activities outside the home. But this is what gives people's social life the greatest completeness.

Therefore, the "active" type of leisure time, crowning the hierarchical ladder of the typology of leisure activities, is the richest, most diverse and socially attractive.

The types of free time in general between the generation of "parents" and "children" are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Type of free time for representatives of different age groups, %

Age	Type of free time		
	Domestic orientation	Developed orientation	Social orientation
Up to 21 years	11,9	11,3	76,8
22-26 years	13,8	22,8	63,4
27-30 years	24,1	42,1	33,8
41-55 years	44,3	38,5	17,2

Source: The data is from own research

The analysis shows the change of intellectual orientations over time. The less young people are burdened with various secular cares, the richer and fuller their free time is. Not surprisingly, the younger generation's satisfaction of the quality of their leisure time, leisure and communication opportunities is significantly higher than that of their "parents". Not satisfied with the full use of their own free time with home orientations are 40.6% of the respondents aged 41-55 and only 24.1 of the respondents young people under 30.

Conclusion:

Every free time is not free for the authentic act of man's inner strength. The part of free time which remains under the control of human needs arising from the repressive social organization and culture of duties is not the real free time for the human being. In this sense, the German author Erich Weber, when it comes to free time, distinguishes between "negative" and "positive" prescriptions of free time "free from" and "free for", free from obligatory activities and free for activities that a person freely chooses, enriching in a certain way his personality. Leisure activity is the result of free choice, although it is no different from the obligatory, necessary activity. As a result, it can be stated that the essence of leisure activities in leisure time is the freedom of choice. There is a wide range of leisure concepts in modern science that need to be further developed.

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