



ESRC Research Group on lifestyles, values and environment

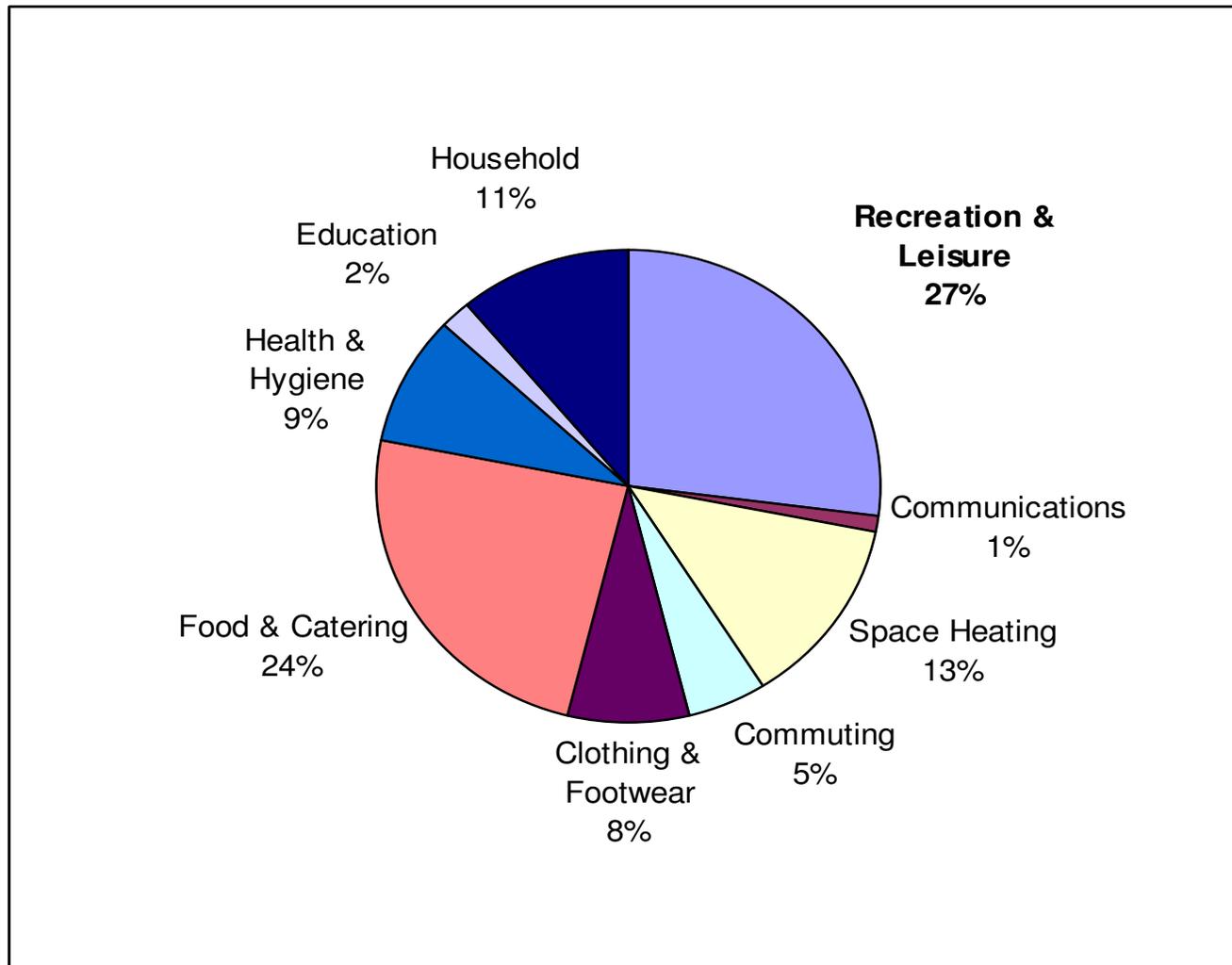
Sustainable and meaningful lifestyles? Valuing serious leisure.

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Presentation

- Focus on serious and intrinsically meaningful leisure practices
- Empirical findings from year long study of middle earners (£17-27kpa).
 - Three interviews and week long time use diary
- Sites of escalation for serious leisure practices
- Responses to constraints for serious leisure practices
- Implications for sustainable lifestyles

GHG emissions allocated to high level functional uses for average UK household in 2004 (Druckman and Jackson, 2010)



Leisure forms

Stebbins (1992) definition of serious leisure:

Serious leisure is ‘the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its specialist skills, knowledge and experience’.



Serious leisure and sustainability

Two potential relationships to sustainable lifestyles:

1. Could hold the potential for time-consuming, low resource using sustainable leisure (Ropke and Godsken, 2007)
2. Could offer intrinsically meaningful uses of time and challenge rationalised, economically productive lifestyles (as suggested by Jalas, 2006)



Escalating expectations, innovations and standards

- Competence
 - Self-fulfilment, self-actualisation etc
 - Socio-technological change

Also:

- Chore
- Comfort
- Cosmopolitanism



Competence

Peter: No, it's just money that is just ridiculous now. You know, **it used to be a very cheap hobby**, you know, where you went out with a £15 pair of Dixons' binoculars and a coat and off you went. **Now**, people are turning up sort of £1,000-£1,500 pair of bins around their neck, a £2,000 scope over their shoulder, a digital camera, a pager, every waterproof piece of clothing that's ever existed and everything else. You know, you can have £3,000-£4,000 worth of stuff on people now.

Q: Is that...is that because the sort of people doing it have changed or just that...?

Peter: The money's there. People want the equipment. They want the... I mean, the photography side, they want the better photographs.

Socio-technological systems and the re-spatialisation of practice



Peter: About the beginning of sort of... '84 – up until about 1980, bird-watching was diabolical – **the information was diabolical**, the books were crap. [...] In them days, **the information came through the grapevine**, which was a phone call, or if you saw someone, and it could take three weeks before I'd even get the information. **I mean the bird could have died three weeks ago before I even knew that it even existed.** [...] **Pagers were put in sort of the beginning of the '90s** because businessmen were using it for that, and someone had thought, well, if businessmen can use it, so can we, **to this present day where...mayhem is generally done.** Now, **[a rare bird] is bleeped out on text messages to mobiles, to phone calls, to anything, and people will spend...any amount of money to get to see it.**





Leisure constraints

- Personal attitudes and values related to the environment
- Financial constraints led to:
 - Protection of serious leisure practices
 - Replacement leisure practices
 - Reduction of impact of leisure practices
 - Commercialisation of the practice
 - Loss of leisure practice
- Time
- Social and cultural trends and differences

Financial constraints – replacement and reduction



Warren: I did go through a bit of a stage where I was rallying myself, but it just got a bit too expensive, you know, as everything does, and just couldn't really sustain the £400 per event and things like this.

Q: Oh, gosh, is that what it takes?

Warren: Yeah, it's crazy, and then you had to maintain the car and insurances and things like this, so it wasn't really viable to do it.

Peter: I have been known to go long distances out in search of birds, so it all depends, **but most of the time, I only stay generally locally now because of the cost of petrol** and the physical climate.



Financial constraints - Loss

Jane: I had to sell my horn to get a car, and that's what I did.

Jane: It's Access to Pharmacy, Medicine and Dentistry, and they run that at Manchester College, so that's in the evenings [...] so I was actually thinking, you know, if it's on any of my band nights, then I'll quit band, you know, I'll do that to do it.



Implications

- Sustainable leisure and leisure in sustainable lifestyles?
- Different policy options
 - Ecological modernisation
 - Higher energy prices
 - Focus on equality
 - Leisure communities and practices
 - Focus on meaningful time use/lifestyles



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‘Sustainable leisure: escalations, constraints and implications’

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