

# Continuity and Changes in Croatian University Students' Leisure Time Activities (1999–2004)<sup>1</sup>

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**Dejana Bouillet**  
**Vlasta Ilišin**  
**Dunja Potočnik**

*Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia*  
*e-mail: dejana@idi.hr; vlasta@idi.hr; dunja@idi.hr*

**ABSTRACT** In this paper the authors discuss changes in Croatian university students' leisure time activities. The analysis is based on the comparison of data collected in the youth researches in Croatia in 1999 and 2004. The results showed significant changes in patterns of leisure time activities of Croatian university students in the five year period; changes occurred in relation to students' sex, age and residential status. At the same time, the results confirmed stable patterns of leisure time activities during the five year period, mostly constituted by products and contents of mass culture.

*Key words:* Croatia, university students, patterns of leisure time activities, changes.

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## 1. Introduction

Leisure contexts and activities are extremely broad and include sport, physical activity, tourism, media, the arts, countryside recreation, and new technologies, amongst others. Leisure continues to provide an important site through which sociological questions can be explored. Work–leisure–family balance remains crucial to achieving quality of life and is of increasing significance, as paid work intensifies, becomes more flexible, and working life becomes extended. The place of lei-

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sure in achieving work–life balance remains an important sociological question, as do questions relating to retirement and volunteerism. However, the early emphasis on the work–leisure relationship is being replaced, at least to a certain extent, by questions relating to the depth and spread of consumer culture (Scraton, 2007).

In the past, leisure was regarded as “behaviour undertaken without reference to time... slow-paced and luxuriating in time” (Jäckel, Wollscheid, 2007:87). Today leisure time is often spent as efficiently as working time in industrialized countries. In other words, leisure time is mostly observed, both in everyday life and in sociology, in relation to socially required work. It is thus considered that the character of work determines, to a significant extent, the behaviour of an individual in his/her free time, but it is also presumed that the manner of spending leisure can influence the character of work (Ilišin, 2002:270). It is a well-known fact that the choice of leisure activities has an influence on the psychosomatic condition of an individual, and consequently on the quality of human work. The same model is analogously applicable to the quality of academic progression and performance of university students. The choice of the leisure activities influences their overall development, that is, the development of their abilities, capacities, knowledge and personality (Andrijašević et al., 2005).

Since the 60s there have also been major changes in young people’s leisure styles. Young people are able to select from and participate in a varied range of leisure pursuits. Moreover, young people are encouraged, through specific models of consumption, to adopt participation styles which allow for highlighting their individuality (Scheerder et al., 2005). Indeed, the role of leisure in the everyday life of an individual is especially crucial when researching the young because at least some of them are going through an intensive formative period. This implies that the young are also socialized through activities in their free time. In that context, developmental psychologists have long emphasised the importance of wider transitional experiences in understanding young people’s leisure activities although the individualistic and biological connotations implied in the psychological concept of “adolescence” have come under criticism (Northcote, 2006). While normalised, linear characterisations of youth transitions are often questioned, the interest in how young people construct their own pathways is very much en vogue. Identity construction is seen to be a central feature of this phase, and the ‘free time’ of leisure is seen to be a pivotal moment when young people can express their identity through consumption activities.

Authors agree that leisure experience plays a critical role for youth by allowing them to exercise choice and become involved in unstructured activities. They may serve as relaxation, stimulation, or play a role in self-development. These experiences, especially those shared with peers, may provide a “shelter” within which youth can experiment with their identities, and how they relate to others (Melman and colleagues, 2007). In the same time, free and leisure time activities are freely chosen and they represent a person’s preferences. Although free time is a vast concept encompassing all the possible activities outside the obligations of work in

everyday communication, it is usually used to denote those activities that persons choose for their pleasure and for satisfying their personal needs for fun, culture and rest (Ilišin, 2002).

Patterns of leisure time activities depend on the current social circumstances, which also influence changes to those patterns (Smith, 1987; Cotterell, 1990; Zeijl, Du Bois-Reymond, Te Poel, 2002). We recall that the free time is often regarded as a basis for development of young people's risky behaviour. In this context, it was found that structured activities and those practiced in the family circle decrease the possibility of unwanted behaviour, whereas the risk increases with commercialization and exclusive orientation to peer groups (McCready, 1997; Mahoney, Stattin, 2000; Sweeting, West, 2003; Piko, Vazsonyi, 2004).

Like Scheerder et al. (2005) notice, rather than being shaped through individual choice, the media and corporate world nowadays strongly influence the leisure preferences of young consumers. Despite a wide range of choices and decisions about leisure, young people's leisure consumption and participation pattern continue to be affected both by structuring and positioning characteristics as well as access to material resources. Lifestyle researchers assume that lifestyle (including leisure and work) is determined on a vertical dimension by assessing variables like income, education, age, and gender. Conversely, they postulate that lifestyle is determined by latent variables, such as interests, motivations, and attitudes as well (Jäckel, Wollscheid, 2007). The authors assume that people with different leisure and income budgets differ in their choices of leisure activities, the time of day when they participate in leisure and their perception of time allocation. The authors showed that while the "old" inequalities (between men and women, old and young, income-rich and income-poor, well educated and low-educated) persist, "new" inequalities emerged when looking at leisure activity budgets, leisure time distribution over the day, satisfaction with leisure time allocation, and perceived stress. In particular, they found differences between the time-rich/income-poor and time-rich/income rich with respect to the distribution of their leisure time. The time-rich/income-rich seem to be more flexible in the timing of their leisure throughout the day than the time-rich/income-poor.

Besides, it is well known that contemporary society generates new social differentiation, fragments the groups and, more and more, individuals. Work and free time become clearly distinct, and the post-modern period increasingly arouses discussion on the issue of free time activities. Thus, it is not surprising that in contemporary societies leisure styles legitimate individuals and groups by status and belong to their identities, which are subject to changes and transformations (Babić, 2003). Additionally, the structure of leisure time activities is influenced by globalization, new technologies and the increase of consumerism in the post-modern society (Miles, 1998, 2000; Roberts, Fagan, 1999).

For example, the available literature suggests that university students and other young adults generally do not meet the recommendations for physical activity

(Nguyen-Michel et al., 2006). Scheerder and colleagues (2005) affirmed that the number of high school boys and girls that only participate in non-organised sports activities has decreased, among boys as well as girls. Nonetheless, the level of sports participation among this group of youngsters is strongly diminishing, mainly among girls. For example, in spite of a growing popularity of (club-) organised sports activities among teenagers in Flanders, the intensity of participation has dramatically changed in a negative way. Andrijašević and colleagues (2005) find that in Croatia female university students spend most of their time watching TV. An equal number of both male and female university students spent their leisure time in coffee shops with their friends, whereas more female university students than their male counterparts read books and magazines and/or journals. Every second male university student participated in some physical recreation activity, whereas only every fourth female university student was active in some sporting or relational activity programme. The authors agree that it is necessary to intervene in the leisure time of the young, especially high school or university students. Spajić-Vrkaš and Ilišin (2005) find that most common activity among Croatian youth is associating with friends (58.1%), although this level decreases with age, material status and parenthood. Other relatively frequent activities among the young were sports, visits to disco-clubs, watching TV and outdoor activities. When comparing how Croatian youth used their leisure time in 1986 and 1999, Ilišin (2002:281) finds that the young in 1999 participated less than fifteen years before in the following activities: going to the cinema and on trips and walks, listening to folk music, visiting art exhibitions, sporting events, public gatherings and theatrical shows or participating in a lottery and competitions. At the same time, they more often go to parties and cafes or are idle.

The thesis about changes in leisure time patterns in youth is also proven in research which was carried out at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb. Comparison of the university students with other youth subgroups (pupils, high school students, employed and unemployed) showed that the university students, more than the others, express a cognitive and sociable interest orientation (and to a lesser extent, traditionalistic and competitive). The university students, also more than the other subgroups, recognize themselves in elite and urban patterns of leisure activities, expressing a decline from the rural pattern (Ilišin, 2002; Ilišin, 2007).

Based on the cited results of the survey, this analysis aims at finding whether there have been changes in university students' leisure time activities and the directions of those changes in the five year period (1999–2004). The changes are analyzed in regard to the sex, age and residential status of the respondents. Named attributes are chosen, since recent surveys in Croatia showed that those attributes (after educational attainment which is omitted in this analysis since all the respondents are university students) have the strongest impact on the differentiation of youth leisure time activities. Since Croatia is undergoing a very intense period of social transformation, which, expectedly, influences all areas of individual and group life, we use two hypotheses in this survey. The first hypothesis says that there have been changes to the university students' leisure time activities in the five year

period. The second says that changes have also occurred to the direction and the strength in the relationship between university students' leisure time activities and their sex, age and residential status. Previous researches identified that the residential status continuously contribute to the interests and youth leisure time activities, while the impact of age and gender varies (Ilišin, 2006; Ilišin, 2007).

## **2. Research methodology**

The survey was conducted on two basic university student samples. The first sample was polled in 1999 and the other in 2004. Both samples achieved satisfactory cover of Croatian territory. The basic population set, the sample of youth was construed from, consists of the population aged 15 to 29. The sample of households from which the participants were chosen was construed as a two-stage probability sample. The Republic of Croatia was divided into 21 regions (counties). The number of participants within each individual region was determined in proportion to the size of the region. The survey locations within a certain region were selected through random choice without return, within which the probability of choosing a survey location was proportional to the number of inhabitants in the location. The selection of households in the survey location was done by random choice from the list of all the addresses in the survey site (location) or by a systematic selection of households in case a list of all the households on the survey location was not available or if it was possible to assume that it had not been updated. Along with the basic list, the pollsters were given backup addresses, chosen in the same manner. They used them to replace the basic addresses in case the participants refused to participate, the address did not exist or there was some other obstruction to the realization of the survey. One person aged 15 to 29 was surveyed per household. The Troldahl and Carter method (1964) was used for the selection of participants within a household. In 1999 1,700 respondents were polled and in 2004 2,000 respondents were polled.

The instrument was construed as a questionnaire with mainly closed-type questions formed as nominal and interval scales. The questionnaire consists of a few sets of variables that can be divided into three basic groups: the socio-demographic variables, variables for value investigation and variables for investigation of some forms of behaviour. In that analysis we are using some variables about the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (gender, age and residential status) and the set of variables about the leisure time of youth (26 variables). These variables questioned the frequency of participation in the respective activities on the basis of the self-evaluation of the respondents in a three grade scale (never=1; seldom=2; often=3).

The frequency of the respective leisure activity patterns is presented by the scalar means (arithmetic medium) for the entire sample of all youth subgroups and for the sub-sample of the university students in two respective years.

Others data analyses were performed for 471 university students at Croatian universities polled in 1999<sup>2</sup> and 446 students polled in 2004<sup>3</sup>. The total sample consists of 917 respondents (university students). Their number varies in the analyses since only the respondents that answered the question were taken into account.

Discriminative analysis was used for the examination of the differences in university students' leisure time activities in the two periods. The basic sample of university students was divided into two according to the year of study.

The influence of sex, age and residential status on the patterns of the university students' leisure time activities was analysed by linear regression analysis, distinctively for the respondents polled in 1999 and those polled in 2004. Each group of respondents, divided by the study year, was tested by three regression analyses. In the first regression analysis sex was a predictor variable, in the second age was a predictor and the third one had a residential status for a predictor.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the university students' sample by gender, age and residential status.

Table 1  
Distribution of the University Students' Sample by Gender, Age and Residential Status

Socio-demographic attributes	Year 1999		Year 2004		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	257	54,6	233	52,2	490	51,4
Male	214	45,4	213	47,8	427	48,6
<b>Age</b>						
15 – 19	128	27,3	94	21,1	222	24,3
20 – 24	312	66,5	303	67,9	615	67,2
25 – 29	29	6,2	49	11,0	78	8,5
<b>Residential status</b>						
Village	148	31,5	124	27,8	272	29,7
Small town	139	29,6	126	28,3	265	28,9
Major city	74	15,7	75	16,8	149	16,3
Capital	109	23,2	121	27,1	230	25,1

<sup>2</sup> Istraživanje *Vrijednosni sustav mladih i društvene promjene u Hrvatskoj*. Ilišin, V.; Radin, F. (Ur.) (2002). *Mladi uoči trećeg milenija*. Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu / Državni zavod za zaštitu obitelji, materinstva i mladeži.

<sup>3</sup> Istraživanje *Mladi i europski integracijski procesi*. Ilišin, V.; Radin, F. (Ur.) (2007). *Mladi: problem ili resurs*. Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu.

It is noticeable that the university student sample in both time periods has slightly more female respondents, age 20–24, who live in small and large towns. This sample distribution is proportionate to data from the 2001 Census (Statistički ljetopis, 2006) which shows there are more than 50% of women among Croatian university students out of which most are in the 20–24 age group. At the same time, it was found that villages account for 39.5 of the overall population, small towns for 16.3% of the overall population and 22.8% of the total Croatian population lives in major cities. Since we found that all variable categories attracted more than 5% of respondents, it is possible to use all the variables in further statistical analyses.

### **3. Differences in university students' leisure time activities in the five year period (1999–2004)**

Analysis of Croatian university students' leisure time in the five year period starts with comparison of the frequency of practicing of the leisure time activities within two groups of youth. First group refers to the university students and another one to other respondents (pupils, high school students, unemployed and employed youth). Table 2 shows medium values of the respondents in leisure time activities, where higher value indicate more frequent practicing of the analyzing activities. Values are showed in regard to the time of data gathering and in regard to the respondents' subgroups.

As we could see from the data in table 2, all the analysed groups most frequently spend their leisure time in amusing and relaxing activities (socializing with the friends, watching TV and video programmes, going to bars and cafés and listening to radio and rock music), but all the youth and university student subgroups differ in the rank of the scales. For instance, in the youth group listening to the radio is in third place, whereas this position in the university student group is held by visiting cafés. Young people spend the least of their leisure time in playing the lottery and competitive games, visiting art exhibitions and public gatherings, humanitarian and volunteer work and participating in political activities.

In both analyzed period university student practice most of the activities more frequently than other respondents, with the exception of family and household chores, listening to folk music, going to church and playing lottery and award games. These activities are predominantly present with youth who do not study at the university. But, these differences are relatively small and we can say that the university students' free time does not differ significantly from that of the rest of the Croatian youth. Analysis of the arithmetic mediums of the youths' leisure time activities in the two time periods examined points to an interesting tendency. University students in the 2004 sample, in comparison with their colleagues from the 1999 sample, take part in almost all activities examined, with the exception of socializing with friends, listening to radio and rock music, reading books, going to the cinema, going to the theatre, listening to classical music and visiting art exhibitions. A similar situation appears in the 2004 overall youth sample, where respondents undertake most of the activities slightly more often, and more rarely going to bars and cafés, listening to radio and rock and similar music, reading

daily/weekly newspapers, going to discos and dance clubs, going to the cinema and going to church.

**Table 2**  
Comparative Analysis of Leisure Activities of University Students and other Youth (arithmetic mediums)

Activity	Year 1999		Year 2004	
	Youth (n = 1239)	Students (n = 471)	Youth (n = 1554)	Students (n = 446)
Socializing with friends	2,71	2,87	2,78	2,85
Watching TV and video	2,69	2,69	2,79	2,78
Going to bars and cafés	2,53	2,68	2,54	2,75
Listening to rock and similar music	2,41	2,62	2,33	2,60
Listening to radio	2,64	2,61	2,61	2,62
Reading daily/weekly newspapers	2,41	2,45	2,39	2,54
Reading books	2,00	2,34	2,05	2,27
Going to discos and dance clubs	2,20	2,32	2,15	2,44
Going to parties	2,09	2,32	2,14	2,40
Family and household chores	2,46	2,31	2,48	2,42
Going to the cinema	1,98	2,28	1,94	2,25
Taking trips and walks	2,03	2,18	2,16	2,25
Sleeping or idling	2,08	2,18	2,18	2,30
Going to concerts	1,87	2,04	1,91	2,11
Going to the theatre	1,48	1,88	1,53	1,78
Playing computer and video games	1,64	1,84	1,75	1,97
Going to sporting events	1,82	1,82	1,91	2,01
Going to church	1,95	1,79	1,96	1,83
Listening to classical music	1,59	1,76	1,69	1,72
Visiting art exhibitions	1,39	1,71	1,43	1,66
Participating in sporting activities	1,67	1,69	1,70	1,85
Listening to folk music	1,84	1,50	1,91	1,65
Playing lottery and award games	1,65	1,48	1,84	1,79
Visiting public gatherings	1,27	1,36	1,39	1,41
Humanitarian and volunteer work	1,25	1,26	1,28	1,30
Participating in political activities	1,10	1,11	1,14	1,18

It seems that during observed period university students' interest for educational and cultural activities has decreased, while in the overall population interest for relaxing and religious activities has decreased. We will check is it really state of the art by discriminative analysis of the leisure time activities performed on two samples of the university students, which data were gathered in 1999 and 2004.



Middle ranged, but statistically significant changes in Croatian university students' leisure time is examined by the results of the discriminative analysis (Table 3).

Table 3  
Values of Discriminant Function

<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>% of Variance</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>	<b>Canonical Correlation</b>	<b>Wilks' Lambda</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
,124	100,0	100,0	,333	,889	102,015	26	,000

Data in Table 4 show the changes in the frequency of the students' leisure time activities resulting from the five year period.

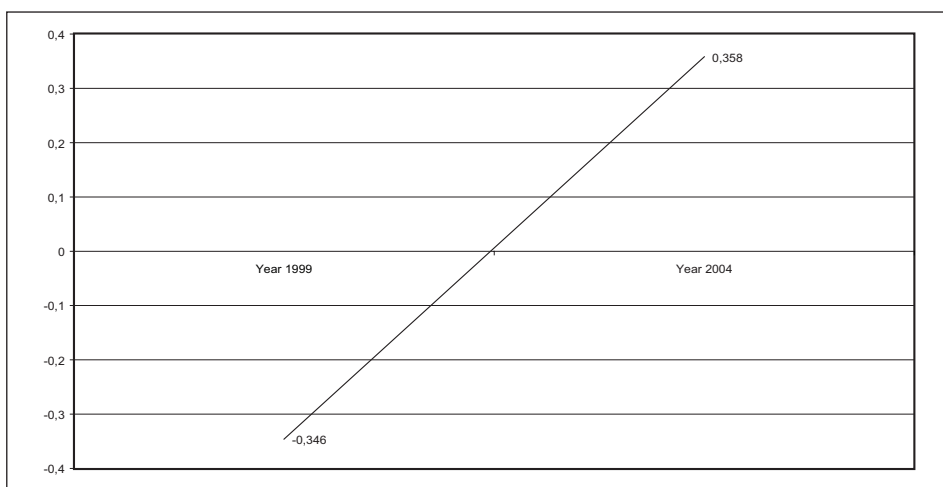
Table 4  
Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients and Structure Matrix of Discriminant Functions: Leisure Time Activity of University Students in year 1999 and 2004

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>Structure</b>
Going to sporting events	,231	<b>,417</b>
Going to discos and dance clubs	,202	<b>,301</b>
Listening to radio	-,190	,013
Listening to rock and similar music	-,039	-,038
Listening to folk music	,146	<b>,326</b>
Listening to classical music	,023	-,075
Going to concerts	,210	,147
Going to the theatre	-,233	-,226
Going to the cinema	-,142	-,066
Going to parties	,034	,187
Going to bars and cafés	,045	,175
Watching TV and video	,134	,288
Reading books	-,108	-,154
Playing lottery and competitive games	,492	<b>,685</b>
Taking trips and walks	,149	,166
Visiting public gatherings	,016	,150
Visiting art exhibitions	-,071	-,140
Sleeping or idling	,178	<b>,313</b>
Participating in sporting activities	,055	<b>,316</b>
Socializing with friends	-,273	-,106
Reading daily/weekly newspapers	,104	,242
Going to church	-,039	,089
Playing computer and video games	,060	,262
Participating in political activities	,113	,257
Humanitarian and volunteer work	,044	,124
Family and household chores	,347	,252

Results of the discriminative analysis shows that the university students' leisure time in the five year period changed to a statistically significantly extent in respect to the frequency of playing competitive games, visiting sporting events, listening to folk music, active participation in sport activities, sleeping and idling, and visiting discos and other dance clubs. According to the values of the group centroids (Graph 1) we can conclude that nowadays university students undertake these activities more frequently.

In other words, previously observed reduced interest of the university students for educational and cultural activities did not become statistically significant, whereas it was determined considerably increased interest for sport and relaxing and amusing contents, including increased participation in lottery and competitive games.

Graph 1  
Values of the Group Centroids on the Discriminant Function



The frequent practice of sporting activities can be stressed as a desirable change in the contents of Croatian university students' leisure time, especially because some findings of other research show a decrease in the number of university students who are engaged in sporting activities during their leisure time (Andrijašević et al., 2005; Scheerder et al., 2005). On the other hand, more frequent playing of competitive games and a higher inclination to idling belong to less desirable changes in the university students' leisure time activities. Increase in participation in the competitive games can be explained by the insight that the transitional period has brought a significant increase in the need for acquiring material goods (Radin, 2002:54), but also in the popularization of sport betting offices the number of whose users is constantly growing in Croatian society. At the same time, it is possible to assume that this orientation to betting at least to some extent contributes to more frequent watching of these sporting events.

More frequent listening to folk music and more frequent going to discos are culturally very interesting phenomena which have led to very vivid discussions in the Croatian public, predominantly mentioned as factors of demodernization. Our results suggest that the increase in the popularity of listening to folk music and more frequent going to discos are inter-dependent to some extent since the performers of this sort of music as a rule play in clubs. The increase of the number of young listeners of folk music was expected as a result of the processes Croatia has been undergoing since 1990. Firstly, there was a relatively strong process of re-traditionalization which also reached the area of mass culture and entertainment. Rock music, which was the most popular by then on the music level, was suppressed in favour of so-called national patriotic songs whose basis is adapted folk music. This way, the present generation of university students practically grew up in a music environment that made them more prone to listen to folk music. Mentioning this, we have to keep in mind that before 1990 national music had a respectable number of followers, but their social visibility was significantly smaller since both players and consumers of this sort of music were forced into the rural cultural reservoir which existed on the margins of society which was reached by strong modernization processes. But, it is important to know that folk music even then had least followers among the youth, and university students have always been a group which recruits its smallest number of followers. The same is true today: albeit the popularity of the folk music among youth has risen, university students remain those who less frequently enjoy this sort of music, although they have not completely resisted the re-traditionalization influences.

Although the five year period is relatively short and albeit the changes detected here will change in form, it seems well-grounded to draw the conclusion that the changes characterising Croatian social reality also influence the university students, and, in this context, the ways they spend their leisure time. The specificity of university students in the youth population suggests they are the most sensitive seismograph of social change, since they constitute a segment of the society which is fastest in its adaptation to social conditions. When we talk about Croatian university students in 1999, we have to keep in mind the circumstance of their sharing in the experience and the problems common to their peers in other transitional countries, but they were also going through difficulties unknown to those peers. To be more specific, growing up in an environment of war was incorporated into their experience. Furthermore, these young people were children during the war, when all extreme situations and events leave very deep marks. This is an extremely important fact, because they were the direct victims of war aggression and it caused multiple damage that all the members of the community feel, and especial those that are otherwise socially more vulnerable. Although the university students polled in 2004 were children during the war period, their youth took place in less turbulent social conditions. We believe it is reasonable to attribute to this circumstance, among others, the search for the reason for the changes in the patterns of leisure activities.

#### 4. Correlation between university students' leisure time activities and socio-demographic attributes

The results of the linear regression analyses (Table 5) show that the respondents' leisure time in both time periods has a middle ranged but statistically significant correlation with their age and residential status.

Table 5  
Model Summary and ANOVA of linear Regression Analysis

	Year 1999			Year 2004		
	Gender	Age	Residential status	Gender	Age	Residential status
R	.244	.588	.340	.354	.403	.394
R Square	.059	.346	.116	.125	.163	.155
Std. Error of the Estimate	.498	.417	.523	.533	1.082	1.092
Sum of Squares	6.646	37.549	15.148	16.561	96.242	89.420
F	1.029	8.295	2.134	2.245	3.163	2.886
Sig.	.426	.000	.001	.001	.000	.000

The biggest changes occurred in correlation between leisure time and the respondent's gender; in 1999 there was no statistically significant correlation of gender and leisure time patterns, whereas a correlation appeared in 2004. The value of the correlation (R) shows that the university students' leisure time patterns mostly differ in regard to age group, while the least difference is found in regard to the respondents' sex.

Tables 6 and 7 show Beta coefficients, value and the significance of t-test regression analyses which give insight into leisure activities which differed mostly in the analyzed groups of respondents.

In 1999 respondent's age influenced the frequency of visiting sporting events, going to discos and other clubs and going to church (to mass, lectures, etc.). Older university students most often visited sporting events while their visits to disco clubs and church were rare. Frequency of listening to folk music and going to church decreases with the increase of the level of urbanization, while going to the cinema increases. These trends are expected if we take into account that many smaller towns closed their cinemas in the last fifteen years. At the same time, orientation to folk music and church activities is consistent with the already emphasized tendency of strengthening some traditionalistic dimensions of Croatian society.

Table 6  
Differences in University Students' Leisure Time Activity by Age and Residential Status – Year 1999

Activity	Age			Residential status		
	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.
Going to sporting events	<b>.172</b>	<b>3.075</b>	<b>.002</b>	.052	.951	.342
Going to discos and dance clubs	<b>-.186</b>	<b>-3.511</b>	<b>.000</b>	-.030	-.576	.565
Listening to the radio	.000	-.006	.995	-.025	-.460	.646
Listening to rock and similar music	.029	.526	.599	-.065	-1.199	.231
Listening to folk music	.042	.841	.401	<b>-.146</b>	<b>-3.043</b>	<b>.002</b>
Listening to classical music	.026	.477	.634	.092	1.749	.081
Going to concerts	-.107	-1.894	.059	.028	.508	.612
Going to the theatre	-.009	-.142	.887	.048	.780	.436
Going to the cinema	.005	.104	.917	<b>.118</b>	<b>2.333</b>	<b>.020</b>
Going to parties	-.006	-.096	.924	-.048	-.867	.386
Going to bars and cafés	.019	.362	.718	.030	.579	.563
Watching TV and video	.060	1.119	.264	-.073	-1.403	.161
Reading books	.076	1.441	.150	-.032	-.624	.533
Playing lottery and competitive games	-.024	-.488	.626	-.048	-1.008	.314
Taking trips and walks	.046	.893	.372	.069	1.371	.171
Visiting public gatherings	-.010	-.173	.863	-.070	-1.301	.194
Visiting art exhibitions	.070	1.136	.257	.049	.810	.418
Sleeping or idling	-.060	-1.158	.248	.079	1.560	.119
Participating in sport activities	.008	.146	.884	.062	1.188	.236
Socializing with friends	-.079	-1.586	.114	.030	.627	.531
Reading daily/weakly newspapers	.010	.192	.848	.063	1.272	.204
Going to church	<b>-.106</b>	<b>-2.175</b>	<b>.030</b>	<b>-.160</b>	<b>-3.359</b>	<b>.001</b>
Playing computer and video games	.060	1.191	.234	.046	.947	.344
Participating in political activities	-.017	-.335	.738	.000	.008	.993
Humanitarian and volunteers' work	.038	.731	.465	.066	1.303	.193
Family and household chores	-.014	-.278	.781	-.041	-.823	.411

Although in 1999 leisure time patterns did not differ in regard to Croatian university students' gender, in 2004 gender was the strongest variable in contributing to the differences. As a result, men more frequently visit sporting events, participate in sporting activities, play computer games and read newspapers. On the other hand, girls more frequently listen to the radio, take trips and walks, go to church and are engaged in family and household chores. It was found that sex differences

clearly point to the permanency of traditional role models and interests that persistently survive even in the most elite group of youth.

Table 7  
Differences in University Students' Leisure Time Activity by Gender, Age and Residential Status – Year 2004

Activity	Gender			Age			Residential status		
	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.
Going to sporting events	<b>.216</b>	<b>4.372</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.125</b>	<b>2.197</b>	<b>.029</b>	-.107	-1.913	.056
Going to discos and dance clubs	-.043	-.860	.390	<b>-.133</b>	<b>-2.305</b>	<b>.022</b>	.030	.523	.602
Listening to radio	<b>-.138</b>	<b>-3.011</b>	<b>.003</b>	-.022	-.413	.680	.006	.109	.913
Listening to rock and similar music	-.026	-.596	.552	.058	1.138	.256	.035	.700	.484
Listening to folk music	-.020	-.456	.649	-.012	-.227	.821	-.031	-.625	.532
Listening to classical music	-.067	-1.361	.174	.054	.944	.346	<b>-.145</b>	<b>-2.595</b>	<b>.010</b>
Going to concerts	.031	.645	.519	-.011	-.200	.841	<b>-.170</b>	<b>-3.090</b>	<b>.002</b>
Going to theatre	-.033	-.632	.528	.041	.678	.498	.109	1.825	.069
Going to cinema	-.043	-.950	.343	<b>-.145</b>	<b>-2.754</b>	<b>.006</b>	<b>.184</b>	<b>3.553</b>	<b>.000</b>
Going to parties	.077	1.540	.124	-.039	-.682	.496	.057	1.009	.313
Going to bards and cafés	-.079	-1.667	.096	.052	.958	.339	-.047	-.879	.380
Watching TV and video	-.084	-1.843	.066	-.017	-.321	.748	-.052	-.991	.322
Reading books	-.091	-1.935	.054	.095	1.754	.080	-.030	-.556	.579
Playing lottery and award games	.012	.257	.797	-.028	-.540	.590	.023	.443	.658
Taking trips and walks	<b>-.105</b>	<b>-2.212</b>	<b>.028</b>	.119	2.159	.031	-.021	-.380	.704
Visiting public gatherings	.027	.559	.577	-.106	-1.913	.056	-.065	-1.183	.237
Visiting art exhibitions	.027	.497	.619	.107	1.706	.089	<b>.196</b>	<b>3.183</b>	<b>.002</b>
Sleeping or idling	-.027	-.619	.536	-.054	-1.089	.277	.054	1.105	.270
Participating in sport activities	<b>.094</b>	<b>2.022</b>	<b>.044</b>	.026	.479	.632	.004	.079	.937
Socializing with friends	-.008	-.163	.870	-.028	-.506	.613	.085	1.587	.113
Reading daily/weakly newspapers	<b>.103</b>	<b>2.249</b>	<b>.025</b>	.055	1.038	.300	<b>.117</b>	<b>2.241</b>	<b>.026</b>
Going to church	<b>-.116</b>	<b>-2.722</b>	<b>.007</b>	-.029	-.589	.556	-.065	-1.337	.182
Playing computer and video games	<b>.166</b>	<b>3.706</b>	<b>.000</b>	.004	.068	.946	-.007	-.139	.890
Participating in political activities	.027	.564	.573	.066	1.195	.233	-.049	-.908	.364
Humanitarian and volunteers' work	.084	1.807	.071	.021	.394	.694	.035	.667	.505
Family and household chores	<b>-.218</b>	<b>-4.690</b>	<b>.000</b>	.020	.381	.703	-.048	-.902	.368

As was the case in 1999, the respondents' age contributes to the differences in frequencies of visits to sporting events and discos. Differences in going to church decreased, but the ones related to visiting theatres increased. Older university students more often visit sporting events and rarely discos and theatres.

Whereas in 1999 the residential status of the university students influenced listening to folk music, going to cinemas and theatres, in 2004 residential status contributes to the frequency of listening to classical music, going to concerts, cinemas and art exhibitions, and reading newspapers. Frequency of going to cinemas increases with the level of urbanization, while listening to classical music and going to concerts decreases.

According to the data presented, it seems that the changes characterising Croatian society in the five year period leave significant tracks in the structure of leisure activities of Croatian university students. In this sense, the strengthening of the traditionalism is especially important, which indicates larger and more significant differences in leisure activities of girls and boys polled in 2004. This circumstance indirectly points to the strengthening of gender belonging in contemporary Croatian conditions, which was also found by some other research recently conducted in Croatia (Bouillet, 2006). Tendencies related to practising of religious activities, which were more noticeable in 1999 than in 2004, points to the re-traditionalisation of Croatian society. In other words, in 1999 young university students of rural origin more often visited church in 1999, whereas in 2004 these differences disappeared, and the relation of going to church and sex appeared. In this context, it is useful to know that one fifth of the young visits church often (Ilišin, 2007). While in earlier years (1999) residential status more significantly differentiated Croatian youth in regard to rural attributes (i.e. going to church and listening to folk music), recently (2004) differences are more overt in the so called elite cultural pattern which is recognised by frequent visits to art exhibitions and cinemas and reading newspapers.

The most permanent relationship was found between age and the respondents' leisure time. In both time periods the frequency of going to discos and clubs decreases with the rise of age and visiting of sporting events increases. It is more likely that these differences are a result of the growing up process than changes in the social environment in which the present generation of university students is growing.

## **5. Concluding remarks**

The results of our analysis partially support the hypothesis that there have been changes to the university students' leisure time activities in the five year period and that in the same period a change also occurred to the direction and the strength in the relationship between university students' leisure time activities and their gender, age and residential status. Nowadays university students more frequently

practice playing competitive games, visiting sporting events, listening to folk music, active participation in sport activities, sleeping and idling, and visiting discos and other dance clubs. In other words, increased interest for sport, amusing and relaxing activities was showed. Frequency of university students participating in activities continuously depends upon age and residential status whereas the impact of age increased in the last year of research.

Listening to rock and similar music, listening to folk music, going to the theatre, going to parties, going to bars and cafés, watching TV and video, reading books, visiting public gatherings, socializing with friends, participating in political activities, humanitarian and volunteer work are activities which did not contribute to the statistically significant differences between the university students in five year period. Among them, there are some in which youth take part very often (listening to rock and similar music, going to parties, going to bars and cafés, watching TV and video, socializing with friends), relatively often (listening to folk music, going to theatre, reading books) and very rarely (participating in political activities and humanitarian and volunteer work). This pattern of leisure time activities is relatively stable in time and independent of gender, age and residential status of university students.

We hold that the differences in many of the leisure activities of Croatian university students are to the greatest extent result of the relevancy of the role of mass culture in youth leisure time. It is a culture created “according to mass norms of industrial production, and spread by technical means of mass diffusion (according to a weird Anglo-Latin neologism: *mass-media*), it addresses social mass, i.e. one gigantic conglomerate of individuals, gathered independently of internal social structure (class, family, etc.)” (Moren, 1979:12). Such massification, manifested by the increase in cultural production and the number of potential users, marked the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and youth were the first to embrace new contents and forms. The original moral panic caused by a feeling of supremacy “levelled out” taste and a loss of critical (emancipation) potential of culture gradually was calmed, among other things, thanks to the authentic culture of new art forms (movie, rock music, comics).

Research into youth in the world and in Croatia has been showing for decades that the basic content of their leisure time is related to artefacts of a mass culture (inside which, by the way, there are significant and multiple differences), but also that the contents of elite (classical) culture have not been completely suppressed from the life of youth. Research done in Croatia showed that there have been some stable patterns of leisure time activities over the past decades – such as rural, urban and elite cultural patterns (Ilišin, 1988, 1991, 2002, 2007) – which is to a significant extent constituted by the products and contents of mass culture.

We agree with Braungart and Braungart (2002) who said that understanding youth culture (whether mass, subcultural, alternative or counter cultural) involves both sociohistorical and psychological considerations. Taken together, sociohistorical



theories suggest that youth cultures are likely to form when the size of the youth cohort is relatively large; when societies are undergoing rapid change, are pluralistic and have problems integrating their young people into mainstream institutions; and when members of the younger generation have grown up under different conditions from their elders and express dissatisfaction with conventional society by creating their own values and lifestyles. From a psychological perspective, explanations of youth cultures have been based on psycho-dynamic, developmental, cognitive, personality, behaviourist and social psychological theories. The conclusions are that those young persons who support some form of youth culture may be motivated by the life-cycle needs of youth (identity formation, self-determination, psychosocial experimentation, peer affiliation and bonding); personality traits (the desire to break the bounds of conventionality, engage in high risk behaviour, weak control of impulses, emotional conflicts); and cognitive processing (attributions, gestalt and deciding there is more to gain than lose by joining reference groups that support their values and goals).

Understanding of the leisure time of both university students and youth in general, results in a wide comprehension of a culture as the context in which young people form cultural attitudes and behaviours and causing the long-term effects of youth cultures on society and on adult development. In other words, leisure time is an area of everyday life in which the young are socialized and acquire life and cultural habits, of which some will persist throughout their life, determining the quality and style of their life as grown ups.

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**Dejana Bouillet**

**Vlasta Ilišin**

**Dunja Potočnik**

*Institut za društvena istraživanja u Zagrebu, Hrvatska*

*e-mail: dejana@idi.hr; vlasta@idi.hr; dunja@idi.hr*

## **Kontinuitet i promjene u slobodnom vremenu hrvatskih studenata (1999–2004)**

### **Sažetak**

U ovom radu autorice analiziraju promjene u aktivnostima slobodnoga vremena hrvatskih studenata. Analiza se temelji na usporedbi podataka prikupljenih istraživanjima mladih u cijeloj Hrvatskoj 1999. i 2004. godine. Rezultati su pokazali da je u promatranom petogodišnjem razdoblju došlo do znatnih promjena u nekim segmentima provođenja slobodnoga vremena hrvatskih studenata, kao i u smjeru i jačini povezanosti obrazaca korištenja slobodnoga vremena sa spolom, dobi i rezidencijalnim statusom studenata. Istodobno, potvrđeno je postojanje stabilnih obrazaca provođenja slobodnoga vremena studenata u promatranom razdoblju koje u najvećoj mjeri konstituiraju produkti i sadržaji masovne kulture.

*Cljučne riječi:* Hrvatska, studenti, aktivnosti slobodnog vremena, promjene.

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