
Articles

The Role of Parents and Peers in the Leisure Activities of Young Adolescents

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Up to now, leisure research on the parent-peer orientation of juveniles primarily has focussed on adolescents. The purpose of this study is to investigate the degree to which pre-adolescents as well as adolescents associate with parents and peers in their leisure time. Based on recent theoretical conceptions of childhood sociologists, a questionnaire was designed for children and young teens aged ten to fifteen years. A total of 927 Dutch juveniles from different social classes participated in the current study. A leisure kids typology was constructed by means of Principal Components Analysis for categorical data (PRINCALS). It was found that ten to twelve year old children from higher social classes were family kids. They spend a substantial part of their leisure time with parents and siblings. Fourteen and fifteen year old boys, especially those from higher social classes, strongly focussed on peer groups, whereas girls of the same age had a salient preference for dyadic friendships. Questions on parental attitude towards leisure activities and choice of friends showed that ten to twelve year olds, specially those from higher social classes, experienced most parental interference in their leisure activities. Teenage girls from lower social classes encountered most parental attention concerning peer contacts. Our findings partially support theoretical conceptions regarding the parent-peer orientation of children and teens, but add some important nuances to these general perspectives.

KEYWORDS: *Transition from childhood into adolescence, parents and peers, childhood sociology, leisure kids typology.*

Introduction

In the past fifty years, studies into the role of parents and peers in the leisure of juveniles have been shaped by several different theoretical per-

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spectives. Parallel to social developments like the start of a longer period of education and a consumer market aimed specifically at youngsters, the relationship juveniles maintain with their parents and peers was the focus of increasing interest by sociologists in the decades after World War II. Up until the 1980s, sociological research on this topic mainly focussed on adolescents around fourteen years and upwards, from which it became clear that parents are consulted mostly on career planning, whereas peers are advisors on leisure time choices. Recently, childhood sociologists have demanded more attention for the role of parents and peers in the leisure of children. Within this approach, the theoretical interest largely focuses on the *transition from childhood into adolescence*, which has been suggested to have advanced under the influence of modernization processes. The increasing amount of time contemporary children spend with peers and the rise of a consumer market directed at children has offered pre-adolescents the opportunity to create a specific "child culture" that largely resembles the culture of adolescents. According to childhood sociologists, these developments have not led to a subordination of the role of parents in the leisure of children. Under the influence of developments in the labor market, in particular the growing demand for flexible employees and increasing interest in informal and life long learning, leisure time has increasingly become learn-and-develop time. Parents who are aware of this development urge their children to fill their leisure time actively and usefully.

The present study attempts to make a contribution to this discussion by examining whether the contact with parents and peers changes in the course of the transition from childhood into adolescence. First, we will look at several relevant streams in leisure and peer research to put our study in context. This research is part of an inter-cultural comparative study between Germany and the Netherlands (Büchner et al, 1998). In this article, we shall concentrate on the Dutch part of the study. We shall report on the sample, the research instrument, analysis techniques and subsequently present and discuss our results.

Theoretical Approaches in Leisure and Peer Studies

Structural-functionalism: The Role of Age

Right after World War II, a structural-functionalistic socialization perspective (Eisenstadt, 1956; Parsons, 1942) dominated theoretical and empirical research on leisure and peers. A change in orientation was discovered in juveniles, moving from their parents to their peers (Te Poel, 1997). It was believed that parents were no longer able to prepare their adolescent children for the diversity of social roles in a complex society. Intensive participation in peer groups, on the other hand, would give youngsters the chance to try out new social roles, in particular those of the consumer and courtship-partner. Dunphy (1963), who studied the contribution that peer groups made to learning an adult sexual role, established an age-bound phase development in the structure of peer groups. He stated that young adolescents

begin looking for contact with peers of the opposite sex while they are in the safe seclusion of same sex groups. Only in mid-adolescence do mixed groups arise after the leaders of same sex groups have taken the initiative of starting individual contacts with the opposite sex. In late adolescence, the mixed groups fall into heterosexual pairs. Coleman (1978) developed a corresponding model in which he showed that this peer group development is accompanied by a step-by-step release from the parents, which leads to increasing conflicts between parents and youngsters.

Sub-cultural Studies: The Role of Gender and Social Class

One of the suppositions which arose during the structural functionalism of the 1950s and 1960s argued that class oppositions had leveled out under the influence of the upcoming consumer society. Instead, so it was assumed, a generation gap had developed (Schelsky, 1957). In the 1970s, neo-Marxist British researchers from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) criticized this supposition. On the basis of ethnographic studies, they discovered several youth cultures divided by *class*, *gender*, and *ethnic origin* instead of one uniform youth culture. CCCS theoreticians argued that the structure of and the conventions within peer groups as well as the way in which groups of youngsters presented themselves were partially determined by experiences in a hierarchically stratified society, which also fundamentally influenced the life and lifestyles of parents. In their leisure styles, youngsters were said to express focal concerns like poverty and wealth, upward mobility, racism, masculinity, and femininity. This shows a continuity of the youth sub-cultural style forms and the parental life patterns, which are determined by social class. Within this perspective, the peer group was no longer primarily considered to be a socialization factor with its own contribution to approaching adulthood. The peer group was specifically seen as a cultural factor. By creating their own lifestyle, youngsters expressed communal experiences of social deprivation. CCCS researchers found that boys express themselves differently from girls. Since boys generally have more freedom of movement than girls, they are more often found in public with their peer groups. Girls are more likely to be tied down to their homes. Together with one or a few intimate girlfriend(s) they create a "bedroom culture" (McRobbie, 1978; Naber, 1985).

In CCCS studies of later dates, the socialization perspective came forward again when the reproductive action of youth sub-cultural life forms received greater attention. Boys and girls would contribute to the reproduction of social inequality through their own class bound culture of masculinity or femininity (McRobbie, 1978; Willis, 1977). This gave the CCCS studies the label of "left-wing functionalism" at the beginning of the 1980s.

In the course of the 1980s, the variation in youthful leisure styles increased rapidly. This greater diversity no longer permitted youth subcultures to be explained solely on the basis of the social structure of class, gender and ethnic-cultural relationships. In various life-world studies, the significance

and structure of peer groups were studied from a social-psychological perspective. Like the CCCS studies, the results of these studies refined Dunphy's (1963) age bound phase model. Girls, for instance, swap their safe seclusion of the same sex group for mixed groups at a younger age than boys do (Hendry et al., 1993; Van der Linden et al., 1989).

Childhood Sociology: The Role of Parents and Peers

In both the structural functionalistic and in sub-cultural studies, little attention was paid to pre-adolescent peer-relationships. Recently in the U.S. and in Europe, *childhood sociology* has received more attention. According to childhood sociologists, the period of childhood is more than just a development phase, which is mainly dominated by parents. Contemporary children are seen as active social actors who, as a result of modernization in Western societies, have become a visible, separate group (Büchner, 1995; Hofferth et al., 1998; Honig et al., 1996; Kline, 1993; Qvortrup, 1995; Seiter, 1993; Steinbergh et al., 1997; Zinnecker 1996). Since children are active daily in numerous instances outside the family and have access to various mass communication means, the family is no longer the sole frame of reference. The diversity of peer contacts at school and in leisure time in combination with the influence of the media and commercial markets (toys, sport articles, clothes) has led to a personal peer-culture (Corsaro, 1997; Erwin, 1998; Frønes, 1995; Hengst, 1996). Children are also aware at quite a young age of *youth*-cultural activities and they make use of the offer of leisure activities for youngsters—pop concerts, discotheques, and such. On the basis of this, childhood sociologists have supposed an advancing of the youth phase at the cost of childhood (Büchner et al., 1996; Frønes, 1993; Postman, 1982).

However, the enlargement of the role of peers in pre-adolescent leisure time does not mean that parents have become unimportant. According to childhood sociologists, parents stimulate their children not only to do the best they can at school, but also to spend their leisure time usefully at as young an age as possible. They encourage their children to develop leisure time interests (music, sport, creative skills) (Barthelmes et al., 1997; Bosma et al., 1996; Kloeze et al., 1996) and are prepared to carry out supportive services for them (e.g. transport to activities, coaching) (Karsten, 1995, 1996; Torrance 1998). As a result, children focus strongly on their parents and are often dependent on them for undertaking leisure activities. The influence of parents on their children is not equal in all families, though. More financial space and a higher educational level of the parents coincides with more explicit ideas about what useful leisure time is and what the leisure activities of the children should be (Zinnecker, 1995).

In spite of the importance given to the earlier transition to the youth phase in child sociology, only a few empirical studies have been done into this life period up until now. Central to these studies, which are mainly small-scale qualitative and hypothesis generating, is the question of what influence modernization has on the way in which young adolescents shape their peer

relationships. Büchner and Fuhs (1994) and Torrance (1998) found that juveniles who frequently participate in organized leisure activities often have a differentiated network of peer relationships. Not only do these youngsters associate with classmates and children from their local neighborhood, they also meet friends in leisure institutions. As these children's peer groups are bound to various locations, appointments with friends often have to be planned in advance and generally by means of the telephone. There is little time for spontaneous associations, which too often need to be fixed in the leisure diary and, in this way, take on an organized character. Peer relationships among youngsters, who, on the other hand, make little use of the offer of leisure clubs, mainly consist of neighborhood children and have a less planned and a more spontaneous character.

Purpose of the Present Study

Up until now, childhood sociology has paid scant attention to the question of which changes take place in the role of parents and peers with respect to the leisure time of juveniles during their transition from the child phase to the youth phase. The purpose of the present study is to provide an initial examination of this period of life for ten to fifteen year olds. We asked: *During the transition from the childhood phase to the youth phase, do changes occur in the degree to which juveniles focus themselves either on their family or their peers? If so, what changes occur?*

Peer group was defined as a small group or clique of children and youngsters of the same age who have frequent contact, and which has been formed by the juveniles themselves in an informal setting, but may also have arisen at a leisure club and is based on friendship or similarities in activities.

In the Netherlands, the transition from primary to secondary education—which takes place at the age of twelve—is a major cut-off point for juveniles and their peers. Therefore, we have chosen to distinguish between three age groups for further analyses.

1. The first group consists of primary school children. These pre-adolescents will be indicated as the *10-12 year olds*.
2. The second group consists of youngsters who have just made the transition to secondary education. These juveniles are sometimes twelve, but mainly thirteen. We will call them the *13-year-olds*.
3. The last group consists of adolescent youngsters who have been at secondary school for a longer period of time. We will call them the *14-15 year olds*.

At the beginning of our study, we expected, first of all, that all juveniles, irrespective of gender or social economic status, would spend less leisure time with their parents and would be focussed more on their peers as they grew older, which is in accordance with the structural-functionalistic perspective. Secondly, we expected *10 to 12-year-olds* from higher classes to attend more strongly to their parents than pre-adolescents from lower social classes

because, according to childhood sociologists, those parents have more explicit ideas about using leisure time. For *adolescents* (14-15 years) from higher social classes, on the other hand, we expected a larger peer orientation because of their frequently more complex leisure pattern in comparison to adolescents from lower social classes (Zeijl et al., 1998). The *13-year-old* children, we expected, would reflect a balance between the two reference groups of parents and peers. Thirdly, no unequivocal expectations were formulated about the role of gender. On the one hand, we presumed that both girls and boys frequently hang around with groups of children of the same age. After all, as with the increased leisure possibilities—for which research has shown that both boys and girls use them intensively—it seems probable that gender-specific peer relationships have decreased and possibly even disappeared. On the other hand, on the basis of sub-cultural peer research, it can be expected that adolescent girls more often have dyadic friendships while adolescent boys spend more time in peer groups.

Method

Procedure and Sample

To be able to answer our research question, a questionnaire was developed and administered. Various schools were sent letters, in which the purpose of the investigation was explained and a request for participation was made. Within a short period of time, the schools were contacted a second time, this time by phone, to probe the attitudes of the teachers toward participation. The majority of the schools consented to participation. The selection of the classes occurred in mutual consultation. The researchers expressed their preference for certain classes and the schools indicated whether—according to their timetable—these or other classes could be used. Agreement was reached in all cases. Some schools considered it necessary to inform the parents of the juveniles about the investigation. The researchers had anticipated this request and had drawn up and distributed a “parental letter”. All informed parents approved of their child’s participation.

Researchers from the university were present at the time the questionnaire was carried out in the classroom. Together with the children and teens, they read the introduction to the questionnaire. In this introduction, the purpose of the investigation was explained and the way a questionnaire is filled in was demonstrated. After that, the researchers stayed in the classroom to offer help when necessary. This intensive supervision of the juveniles resulted in a low percentage of non-response. Only 51 of the young adolescents were not capable of completing 90% of the questionnaire within the given time (one lesson = 50'). With the omission of these respondents, a sample of 927 adolescents eventually remained. Table 1 gives an overview.

The total sample included an approximately equal number of boys ($n = 50.8\%$) and girls ($n = 49.8\%$). Most juveniles came from two-parent families (81.2%). Eighteen per cent of the juveniles lived with just one parent

TABLE 1
Age-Division

Age Division	N	Pct.
Primary school		
10-12	180	19.4
11-12	163	17.6
Secondary school		
12-13	171	18.4
13-14	175	18.9
14-15	238	25.7
TOTAL	927	100.0

($\mu = 12.61$; $SD = 1.64$)

due to either divorce or the death of one parent.¹ The majority of the juveniles (92.3%) had brothers and sisters ($i = 1.75$). The questionnaire contained four open-ended questions on the basis of which the youngsters were divided into social class groups.² The first two questions referred to the educational level of both father and mother. The other items asked about the present or, in the case of unemployment, the previous occupation of both parents. The assignment of the juveniles to one of the groups occurred on the basis of the parent (father or mother) with the highest credentials and occupational level.³ Four groups were distinguished:

1. *Lower social class.* The parents of these juveniles had jobs like, for instance: mechanics, road workers, cleaners, bricklayers, and postmen. Generally, they had a or no lower professional training.
2. *Middle social class.* These parents generally had secondary professional training. They worked as foremen, policemen, and small business traders.

¹Of the juveniles in our studies, 8.2% were born outside the Netherlands. The largest group of these adolescents originates from Surinam (a former Dutch colony). The rest mainly originates from other European countries, Morocco or Turkey. As this group is not only small, but also very heterogeneous, no separate analyses were conducted.

²Although the actual classification in social status groups occurred after the questionnaire had been carried out, we already had anticipated this when gathering the sample. Elementary schools from various social areas were included in our samples. With regard to secondary education, we profited from the fact that secondary education in the Netherlands is split up in different educational levels. In general, juveniles from higher social background more frequently go to higher educational levels than juveniles from lower background and the other way around. Consequently, we ensured that various levels of secondary education were included in our sample.

³The division of juveniles into the social status groups was done on the basis of the classification index of Westerlaak, J. M. van., Kropman, J. A., & Collaris, J. W. M. (1991).

3. *Middle-high social class.* This group consisted of, amongst others, teachers, departmental managers and higher level council employees. These parents generally had a higher professional education.
4. *Higher social class.* These parents worked, for instance, as doctors, psychologists, lawyers or had important executive jobs in large companies or with the government (top managers). They had completed a university education.

The division of juveniles over these groups, as is reflected in Table 2, is broadly speaking representative for the total Dutch population.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire developed by Büchner et al. (1996) was used to discover whom juveniles focus on in their leisure time and whether changes take place in this focus during the transition to the youth phase. This questionnaire was developed on the basis of a qualitative, longitudinal study (Du Bois-Reymond et al., 1994) in which pre-adolescents as well as adolescents were studied. In the questionnaire, the juveniles were asked about the different people with whom they spend their leisure time. The amount of leisure time spent with parents or peers was regarded a central indicator of a parent or peer orientation (Büchner et al, 1996, p.161). In conformity with Eisenstadt, it was assumed that being together with either parents or peers implies that children and youngsters adjust their leisure agenda to these people and are affected by their norms, values, and attitudes. The following items were given: *With whom do you spend your leisure time? How often then are you: alone; with your parents; with siblings; with the whole family; with your best friends; with local children; with children with whom you meet regularly at a leisure activity; with a steady group of friends.* The juveniles indicated the incidence of being alone and of their contact with these persons on an four-point scale consisting of: (1) never, (2) hardly ever, (3) sometimes, and (4) often.

TABLE 2
Division into Social Economic Status^a

SES	N	Pct.
Lower	222	24.2
Middle	295	32.5
Middle High	267	29.4
Higher	125	13.8
TOTAL	909	100.0

18 cases (1.9%) are missing

Furthermore, two additional items on the parental attitude towards peer contacts and leisure spending were presented to the juveniles:

- *My parents think it is important that I do not hang around with the wrong friends.*
- *My parents regard organized leisure activities important and want me to undertake these activities.*

The juveniles indicated their extent of agreement with the first item on an four-point scale consisting of: (1) not true at all, (2) not really true, (3) largely right, and (4) entirely right. The second item could be answered with yes or no.

Data Analysis

The main purpose of the present study was twofold. We wished to discover the mutual relationship between the items on the "spending leisure time question" and the relationship between these items and subgroups of subjects. These data were both on an ordinal and nominal level of measurement. The survey items were scored in a limited number of categories with an a priori rank order, of which could not be assumed that the distances between the categories were equal. The subsets of subjects that we are interested in are formed by combining the categories of the variables Gender (boy-girl), Age (10-12, 13, 14-15), and Social Economic Status (SES; lower; middle; middle-high; higher). To study the relationships in the data, Principal Components Analysis (PCA) could be considered. In most textbooks, PCA is defined as the analysis of a correlation matrix, where the objective of the analysis is described as the grouping of the variables. In this approach to PCA, there is no representation of individual subjects or subsets of subjects. Other approaches to PCA, however, emphasize that PCA also models the relationships between the subjects and the variables in so-called biplots (Gabriel, 1971; Heiser & Meulman, 1983), so this property would make PCA an appropriate technique to analyze the current data.

However, the data contain variables with mixed ordinal and nominal measurement level, and because PCA is a technique to analyze numerical variables, the use of a standard PCA would be inappropriate. Principal components analysis for categorical data, as implemented in the PRINCALS procedure in SPSS Categories (1997), allows variables of different measurement levels to be included in the analysis (Gifi, 1990; Meulman, 1992; Krzanowski & Marriott, 1994, Heiser & Meulman, 1994, 1995). PRINCALS simultaneously fits the principal components analysis model and identifies optimal quantifications for the categories of nominal and ordinal variables. As a result of the process of optimal quantification, each variable is replaced by an optimal transformed one, which reflects the nominal and ordinal information of the original variable, where the optimal transformation maximizes the total variance accounted for (VAF). Moreover, PRINCALS combines grouping of variables and grouping of subjects by the use of classification

variables. In our case, the combination variable Gender x Age x SES was used as a (nominal) classification variable. Similar applications of PRINCALS in behavioral sciences can be found, among others, in Vlek and Stallen (1981), Wagenaar (1988, Chapter 3), Kerkhof, Van der Wal & Hengeveld (1988), and Van der Ham, Meulman, Van Strien & Van Engeland (1997).

The outcome of PRINCALS is generally interpreted by way of reading a two-dimensional figure in which the solution is presented in principal axes orientation, so no rotation is applied afterwards. The relationships between the ordinal variables represented by their correlations with the principal components are displayed by vectors (arrows). Each vector points towards the category with the highest score (often). In the opposite direction, extending the vector, lies the category with the lowest score (never). The length of a vector reflects the importance of the variable: the longer the vector, the more variance is accounted for (after optimal quantification). For variables with a decent VAF, the angle between vectors gives an indication of the correlation between the variables (after optimal quantification): the smaller the angle, the higher the correlation between the variables. The subgroups of subjects are displayed by points. A point represents the average (centroid) of scores of a particular subgroup. The group points are positioned according to their relationship with the variables. Points lying closely together represent groups of youngsters with comparable response patterns. The perpendicular projection of a point on a vector indicates the position of the group in the (optimally transformed) data.

The PRINCALS analysis is based on the leisure time variables, with the groups of subjects formed by Gender x Age x SES cross-classified variable. The items on parental attitude were not included in the PRINCALS analysis. They were analyzed separately by means of medians and quartiles.⁴ These items mainly served for further exploration and facilitation of the interpretation of the PRINCALS results.

Results

According to the rule, only dimensions should be used that are associated with eigenvalues significantly larger than 1. The PRINCALS analysis resulted in two principal components with eigenvalues significantly higher than this conventionally accepted cutoff value (the eigenvalues are 1.84, 1.65, 1.03, .93, .87, .82, .70, .63, .53). Thus only two dimensions should be considered.

The juveniles' answers to the question about with whom they generally spend their leisure time are reproduced in Figure 1, the component loadings are given in Table 3.

⁴On the basis of the median and quartiles we were able to detect whether answers on items are homogeneous or rather heterogeneous. The distance between the first and the third quartile is called the quartile distance. This degree measure indicates the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the scores (Büchner et al. 1996).

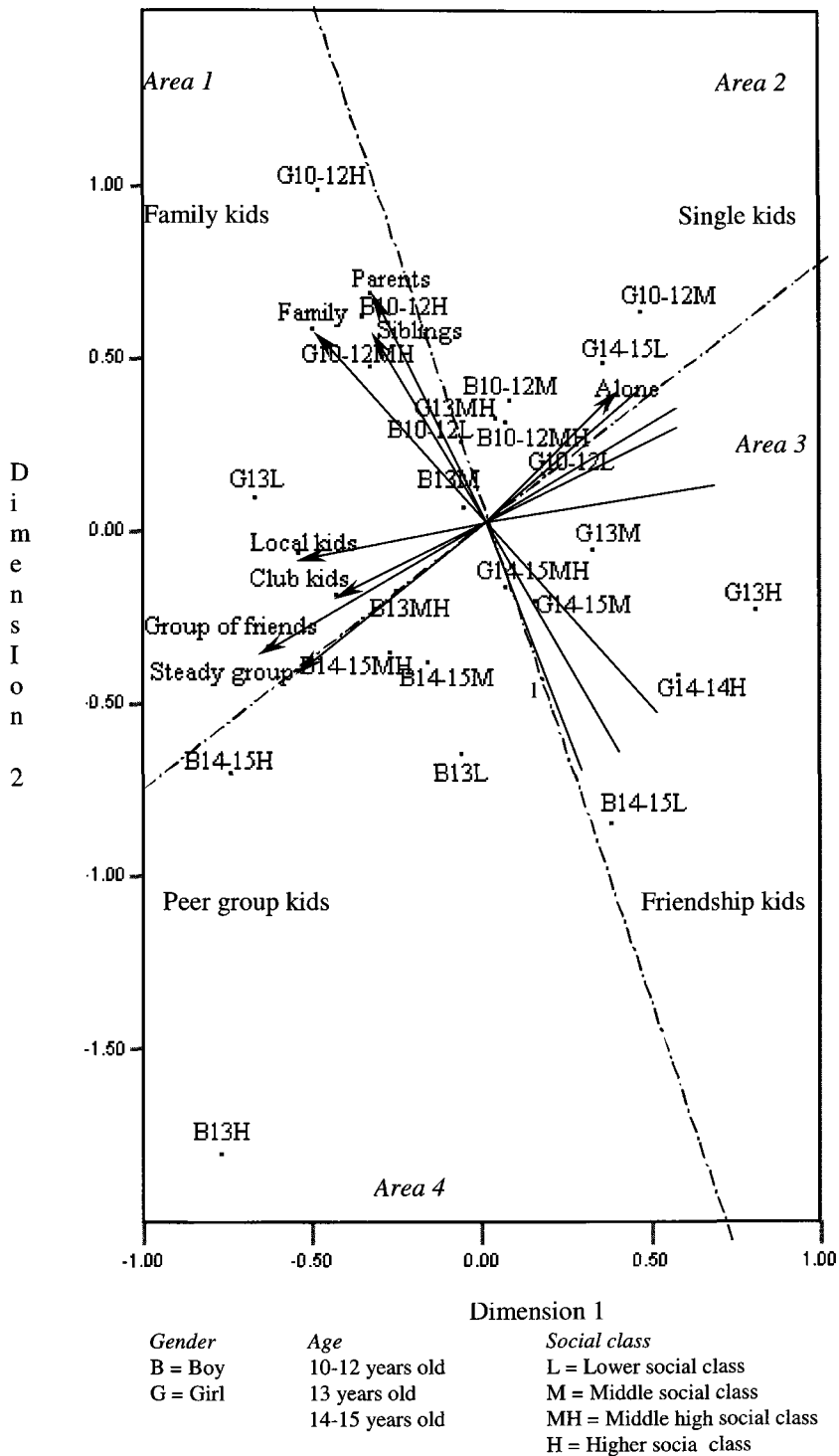


Figure 1. Two-dimensional PRINCALS Solution Leisure Time Variables with Subjects Grouped into Age, Gender and SES Categories

TABLE 3
*Component Loadings on the Two Principal Components:
 PC1 and PC2 and the Variance Accounted for (VAF)*

Variable	Level of Measurement	PC1	PC2	VAF
Gender-Age-SES*	Multiple nominal	-	-	.32
Alone	Ordinal	.37	.36	.27
Local kids	Ordinal	-.54	-.06	.30
Club kids	Ordinal	-.43	-.18	.22
Groups of friends	Ordinal	-.63	-.33	.50
Steady group	Ordinal	-.54	-.40	.45
Siblings	Ordinal	-.30	.54	.38
Parents	Ordinal	-.33	.69	.58
Family	Ordinal	-.50	.59	.59
VAF		.22	.19	.41

*The variables gender, age and SES were combined into one variable with 24 ($2 \times 3 \times 4$) categories.

There is an important general factor (displayed in the first dimension with $VAF = .22$; Cronbach's $\alpha = .58$), but an almost equally important second dimension ($VAF = .19$; Cronbach's $\alpha = .46$). The second dimension separates the bundle Siblings, Parents and Family from the bundle Alone, Steady Group, Group of Friends, Club Kids and Local Kids. In this situation, the two dimensions should not be interpreted separately, but we should interpret four areas that are defined by the two bundles and that describe the two dimensions jointly. These four areas are obtained by drawing a line through the origin and perpendicular to the Peer Group bundle, and another line perpendicular to the Family bundle. The line perpendicular to the Family bundle separates area 1 and area 2 (high scorers) from areas 3 and 4 (low scorers). We suspect these low scorers to have dyadic friendships. The line perpendicular to the Peer Group bundle separates the areas 1 and 4 (high scorers) from the areas 2 and 3 with low scorers; these latter juveniles score high on alone.

Summarizing, going clockwise, four areas are distinguished. Area 1 includes juveniles who score high on both the family and peer group items. Area 2 contains juveniles who score high on family and alone. Area 3 holds juveniles who score high on alone and on friendship. Area 4 contains juveniles who score high on peer group and friendship. These areas will be described below, using the dimension scores for each group in the Gender x Age x SES variable. These dimension scores give coordinates for the group points, and these are displayed in Figure 1. The weighted mean squared distance of the group points to the origin gives the discrimination measure, which is similar to variance accounted for (VAF). To be precise, the discrim-

ination measure displays the ratio of Between to Total variance, and equals .320 (Table 3).

Area 1: The Family-peer Group Area

This area includes juveniles who spend their leisure time primarily with their family or with peer groups. Within this area, two subgroups can be discerned. The first subgroup consists of juveniles who have chosen answers that point mainly towards family. With this response pattern they indicate that most of their leisure time is spent with family members and proportionally less time with peer groups. We call them *family kids*. The second subgroup is an intermediate group of *family/peer group kids*. They spend as much time with their family as with peer groups.

Figure 1 shows that the group *family kids* consists of children between 10 and 12 years old from the middle high and higher social classes (G10-12H; B10-12H; G10-12MH). These youngsters indicate spending a substantial part of their leisure time with parents and siblings. This does not mean that they are very dependent on their parents and unable to stand on their own two feet. After all, we found that these children spend leisure time in peer groups as well. From childhood sociology we know that children from higher social classes in particular get to know the world outside the family and operate in it independently at a young age through various leisure clubs (Büchner, 1995; Corsaro, 1997; Zeijl et al., 1998). Parents from higher social classes influence their pre-adolescent children's leisure time by encouraging them to make intensive use of the wide range of leisure organizations and sport clubs (Zinnecker, 1995). By doing so, they encourage an intensive contact with groups of peers. Besides this, these parents regularly undertake leisure activities together with their children and in this way stimulate an active leisure life. Mothers, in particular, take a central role by introducing their children to the world of music, drama, and other cultural events (Howard et al., 1990).

The group *family/peer group kids* consists exclusively of thirteen-year-old girls from lower social class (G13L). These girls have a clear "double-orientation" (Oswald, 1992). After the transition into secondary education, they meet new peers and spend a considerable amount of time with them. There is, however, no question of a complete shift towards peer groups. These girls spend just as much leisure time with their parents.

Area 2: The Single-family Area

The single/family area includes youngsters who indicate spending most of their leisure time alone or with their family. Within this area, two subgroups can be discerned. The first subgroup consists of juveniles whose answers indicate primarily that they are alone in leisure time. With this response pattern, they indicate spending proportionally less leisure time with family members. We call these juveniles *single kids*. The second subgroup is

an intermediate group consisting of juveniles who spend as much leisure time with their family as alone. They are typified as *single/family kids*.

Figure 1 shows that the group *single kids* includes pre-adolescent and adolescent girls. These girls originate from middle and lower social classes (G10-12L; G10-12M; G14-15L). From recent research, we know that girls from lower social classes are less frequently members of leisure clubs than girls from higher social classes (Büchner et al., 1996; Torrance, 1998; Zeijl et al., 1998; Zinnecker et al., 1996). Their parents are often not able to invest as much time and money in their children's leisure activities. These girls are to be found indoors regularly and keep busy with individual informal activities like listening to music, reading comics, or watching television (SCP, 1998; Zeijl et al., 1998). Moreover, research has shown that lower class girls are more often burdened with household tasks than higher class girls and boys and for this reason have to stay at home (Beker et al., 1994). For adolescent girls, another factor may also play a role. Several studies have pointed to the fact that their parents may fear for the reputation of their daughters and do not want them to hang around in "anonymous" peer groups (Naber, 1985; Ravesloot, 1997).

Figure 1 shows that the group *single/family kids* mostly consists of ten to twelve-year-old boys from various social classes (B10-12L; B10-12M; B10-12MH). Besides these boys, thirteen-year-old girls from middle high social class also indicate spending as much time with family members as alone (G13MH). Several leisure studies have shown that pre-adolescent boys spend a considerable amount of leisure time playing outdoors with peers (Büchner et al., 1996; Zeijl et al., 1998). Apparently, these peer-dominated outdoor activities do not stand in the way of contact with family members. The fact that these boys indicate either being alone or together with parents and siblings insinuates that the subjective importance these pre-adolescent boys attribute to peers is not (yet) as large as the weight adolescent boys allocate to peers.

Area 3: The Single-friendship Area

This area includes juveniles who spend most of their leisure time with one steady friend or alone. The following two subgroups that can be discerned in this area. The first subgroup consists of juveniles who indicate spending most leisure time with a steady friend. With this response pattern, they indicate being together with a steady buddy most of their leisure time and spending proportionally less time alone. We typify them as *friendship kids*. The second subgroup includes youngsters who spend as much time alone as with their steady friend. They are called *single/friendship kids*.

Figure 1 shows that adolescent girls are *friendship kids*. They spend much leisure time with their best girl friends and sometimes are alone (G14-15M; G14-15MH; G14-15H). In this way, they distance themselves from their family. McRobbie (1978) described this phase in the female adolescence as "bedroom culture", but this group also includes girls (G14-15H) who regularly

participate in organized leisure activities together with their girlfriends, like horse riding or tennis (Zeijl et al., 1998). We also find male adolescents in the friendship kids group. They originate, in contrast with the girls, from lower classes (B14-15L). We suspect these boys have taken the first step towards dating. Previous research has shown that lower class boys start sexual relationships at a younger age than boys from other social classes (Ravesloot, 1997).

Thirteen-year-old girls from higher social classes, but also thirteen year old girls from middle social class are *single/friendship kids* (G13M; G13H). They spend as much time alone as with a steady friend.

Area 4: The Peer Group-friendship Area

This area contains juveniles who spend most of their leisure time with their peer group and with a steady friend. In this area, two subgroups are found. This first subgroup consists of youngsters who mainly consort with their peer group. They are less often with a steady friend. We call them *peer group kids*. The second subgroup is an intermediate group consisting of *peer group/friendship kids*. These juveniles spend as much leisure time with their peer group as with a single friend.

The *peer group kids* are adolescent boys, while the adolescent girls are completely absent (B13MH; B13H; B14-15M; B14-15MH; B14-15H). Evidently, boys concentrate much more strongly on larger peer groups than girls during the transition into adolescence. Figure 1 shows that adolescent boys from higher social classes (B13H; B14-15H) are more strongly focussed on peer groups than adolescent boys from other social classes. From recent studies we know that adolescents from higher social classes not only have the opportunity to hang around with other juveniles in the neighborhood, but because of their frequent participation in leisure clubs (Büchner et al., 1996; Zeijl et al., 1998; Zinnecker et al., 1996), they also can keep intensive contact with peers in organized activities. We also found that frequent peer group contacts do not exclude contact with one single friend every now and then.

Figure 1 shows that thirteen-year-old boys from lower social classes are *peer group/friendship kids*. In contrast to the majority of adolescent boys in our study, these boys do not only have a peer group orientation. Besides being with peer groups, they spend a considerable amount of leisure time with one single friend as well.

Parental Interference in Children's Leisure

In the foregoing discussion, we suggested that parents from middle high and higher social classes stimulate the participation in organized leisure activities more often than parents from middle and lower social classes (family/peer group area). In addition, we argued that lower class parents attend more intensively to the peer contacts of their children (single/friendship area). To gain more insight in this matter, all juveniles were asked (1) *whether*

their parents regard organized leisure activities as important and want them to undertake these activities and (2) whether their parents think it is important that they do not hang around with the wrong friends. The first item contained a two point response (yes/no), the second item contained a four point scale (1) not true at all, (2) not really true, (3) largely right, to (4) entirely right. We analyzed the results for the variables Gender, Age, and SES.

A comparison of pre-adolescent and adolescent juveniles' answers to the first question showed that children (10-12) experience more parental influence than adolescents (14-15) do (25% vs. 17% *yes-answers*).⁵ Still, the majority of 10-12-year-olds said that their parents seldom mediate in their leisure time directly (75% *no-answers* from the 10-12 year olds). This does not necessarily mean that these children's parents take no part in their leisure activities. After all, parents can exercise influence indirectly in a subtle way by creating financial possibilities for music lessons or sport and discourage other activities, like hanging around aimlessly (Bosma et al., 1996; Van Strien, 1998). Pre-adolescent girls experience the influence of their parents more than pre-adolescent boys do. More than 30% of the 10-12 year-old girls reported that their parents mediate in their leisure time (20% of the boys).⁶ The social economic status of the family largely influences the degree of parental influence on their children's leisure time: almost half of the children from higher social classes gave *yes-answers* as opposed to barely one fifth of the lower social classes.⁷ Finally, our analyses show that juveniles experience a decreasing parental influence when they get older, and the previously found gender differences disappear as well. The 13-15 year old girls indicate as often as 13-15 year old boys that their parents no longer intervene in their leisure activities (83% for both sexes). What is remarkable is the fact that class differences do remain and become even more pronounced: 91% lower SES adolescents vs. 75% higher SES adolescents say that their parents do not intervene in their leisure time activities anymore.⁸

TABLE 4
Parental Inference in Choice of Friends According to 10-12, 13, and 14-15 Year Old Boys and Girls

Wrong Friends	10-12 Year Olds			13 Year Olds			14-15 Year Olds		
	Mdn	Q1	Q3	Mdn	Q1	Q3	Mdn	Q1	Q3
Boys	3.15	1.79	3.89	3.10	1.61	3.88	3.21	2.61	3.84
Girls**	3.06	1.94	3.83	3.20	2.32	3.88	3.41	2.73	3.97

** Kruskal Wallis $\leq .005$.

⁵ $\chi^2 (2, N = 927) = 8.77; p\#.02$.

⁶ $\chi^2 (1, n = 343) = 4.82; p\#.03$.

⁷ $\chi^2 (3, n = 343) = 13.32; p\#.005$.

⁸ $\chi^2 (3, Mn = 548) = 8.96; p\#.03$.

Turning now to wrong friends. Table 4 shows that all juveniles experience parental interference in their choice of friends (median centers on the category "largely right"). When they grow older, this interference increases for the girls in contrast to the boys. Apart from that, girls from lower social classes experience significantly more parental interference in choice of friends than girls from higher social classes (Table 5). No significant differences were found for boys, although Table 5 points to more parental interference in the peer contacts of lower class boys.

Discussion

From its inception, our study on the role of parents and peers in the leisure activities of young adolescents was framed with three theoretical perspectives: structural functionalism, sub-cultural sociology, and childhood sociology. Given these theoretical perspectives, we focussed on a set of three variables: Gender, Age, and Social Economical Status (SES). By means of Principal Components Analysis for categorical data (PRINCALS), we distinguished four areas: spending leisure time with both parents and peer groups (area 1), with parents and alone (area 2), alone and with one friend (area 3), and with one friend and peer groups (area 4).

With regard to *age*, we found that younger juveniles spend most of their leisure time with their family, whereas older juveniles are generally with peers. These findings are in accordance with functionalistic assumptions and our expectations. We also found that a special place is occupied by thirteen-year-olds. They can rightfully be called *transition children*. They divide their leisure time between parents, peers, and being alone, and in this way, take an intermediate position between the pre-adolescents and adolescents. They no longer have an explicit preference for their family, like the 10-12 year olds, nor are they unmistakably peer oriented, like the 14 and 15 year olds. Apparently, the age of thirteen marks the onset of a growing distancing from parents (especially for girls) and an increasing contact with peers in leisure time.

No unequivocal expectations were formulated on the role of *gender*. Our results have shown that 14-15 year old boys spend an important part of their

TABLE 5
Parental Interference in Choice of Friends According to Boys and Girls from Different Social Backgrounds

Wrong friends	Lower			Middle			Middle High			Higher		
	Mdn	Q1	Q3	Mdn	Q1	Q3	Mdn	Q1	Q3	Mdn	Q1	Q3
Boys	3.35	2.25	3.96	3.32	2.49	3.94	3.02	2.13	3.70	2.88	1.70	3.74
Girls*	3.55	2.46	4.03	3.37	2.67	3.95	3.08	2.40	3.75	3.00	1.98	3.75

*Kruskall Wallis ≤ 05 .

leisure time with peer groups, although every now and then they are together with a steady friend (probably a friend that belongs to the same peer group). Girls of this age, on the other hand, spend most of their leisure time together with a steady (girl) friend. If not, then they are alone. As for the peer contacts of children (10-12), no gender differences were found. Pre-adolescent boys and girls, who frequently participate in organized leisure activities, spend a considerable amount of their leisure time in peer groups. These results imply that the role of gender in the formation of peer relations is not constant over time, despite the fact that a characteristic of modern socialization is that boys and girls go through the same socialization institutions. Apparently, the onset of adolescence, at which the process of identity formation is given a renewed impulse and the uncertainty as to gender roles is the greatest, goes together with the origination of gender specific peer relations.

Clear differences were found between the peer relations of *lower and higher class juveniles*. Although, in general, social classes in the Dutch welfare society are less pronounced than in other European countries, we found clear differences between the peer contacts of higher and lower class juveniles. Children and teens from families with a higher social status spend more time with peers than juveniles from families with a lower social status. They have fuller leisure diaries and more often take part in leisure club activities. The social status of families also throws a light on the overrepresentation of 14-15 year old girls in the group *single kids*. These girls originate from lower SES families. Our additional analyses clarified that these girls feel their parents keep a stricter check on them during their leisure time than their "sisters" from higher classes. According to these girls, their parents are afraid that they will hang around with the wrong friends. We suspect that this parental attitude is connected with a pronounced concern for school failure. From other studies (Ravesloot, 1997; Te Poel et al, in press) we have learned that lower class parents are more afraid than higher class parents that their daughters will not do well at school. They fear their daughters will start their sexual contacts too soon and are concerned that they will not finish school and therefore jeopardize their future economic independence, whereas parents from higher social classes are much less afraid that their daughters will start their sexual contacts too soon and they take it for granted that their daughters will do well at school. The present study shows that, according to the juveniles, parents of higher social classes intervene much more in the leisure activities their children undertake. They know how important it is gain social and cultural capital not only in school, but also outside of school (Zinnecker, 1995).

Considering these outcomes, we feel that no convincing evidence was found for the childhood sociological hypothesis regarding the advancement of adolescence at the cost of childhood. For most Dutch juveniles, the transition into secondary education, which takes place at the age of twelve, goes together with an increasing contact with peers and a decreasing contact with parents. One exception was found, though. In contrast to middle and lower

class juveniles, higher class juveniles had developed frequent contact with peers already in childhood. This finding suggests that the hypothesis regarding the advancement of adolescence mainly relates to higher class youngsters.

On the basis of our study, we plea, first and foremost, for further theory modification in the field of parent and peer relations. We feel that probably the most important outcome of the present study is the finding of a differentiated pattern of social interactions. Juveniles generally do not spend their leisure time exclusively with parents, peers or alone. They divide their leisure time between reference groups. We attribute great weight in this regard to analysis techniques, like PRINCALS, whose outcomes do justice to the complexity of a many-faceted reality. Secondly, the present results ensue from a restricted set of observations tested only in the Netherlands. Recently, we started with a cross-cultural comparison between German and Dutch juveniles. Although, this project has not reached completion yet, this cross-cultural study could shed light on the (in)variance of the patterns of relations we found and on the matter of the advancement of adolescence. Moreover, we feel more research needs to be conducted on the role of parents in the leisure of their children from the perspective of the parents themselves. Finally, it is our opinion that more research is needed on the relevance of organized leisure activities for lower class kids. In a "leisure-oriented society", they are clearly disadvantaged if they do not have enough opportunities to attend structured leisure activities to the same degree as higher class kids. This is a challenge for compensatory programs, which must not only concentrate on school achievement but in addition on a meaningful use of leisure time.

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