

Anselm Strauss (1978) wrote that the idea of social world was suffering from weak conceptualization and application to those areas of social life where this formation figures prominently in everyday activities. Moreover, he lamented, there is too little awareness of the significance in symbolic interactionism of social world analysis. Today, this indictment still holds, even though some progress has been made in improving the situation. Notably, various scholars in leisure studies have amassed an impressive number of field studies bearing on the social worlds of a range of serious pursuits.

Still, this sphere of modern life needs a coherent statement of what social worlds consist of, what they do, and where they fit in social theory. The subtitle of this book – Framing the Leisure Experience – hints at the answers to these questions. The core activity(ies) lying at the base of the leisure experience are pursued within the social world that encompasses such activity. To understand more fully why people are attracted to and continue with a serious pursuit, we must also understand its social world.

Furthermore, the concept of social world is anchored in social theory and, in the case of the worlds of leisure, that of the serious leisure perspective has become an exemplar. This link is explained in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 focuses on the members of leisure social worlds and the activities that the first so enthusiastically pursue. Unruh's four-fold typology of members is the basis for this discussion. Chapter 3 provides a window on the culture and communications of these worlds. Chapter 4 returns to the issue of the differences separating the casual and serious leisure social worlds.