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*"This is a great summary of research and concepts in leisure and an excellent starting point for a theoretical debate about 'positiveness' in the personal and public sphere. Well written and very accessible even for readers not familiar with sociology. Highly recommended."*

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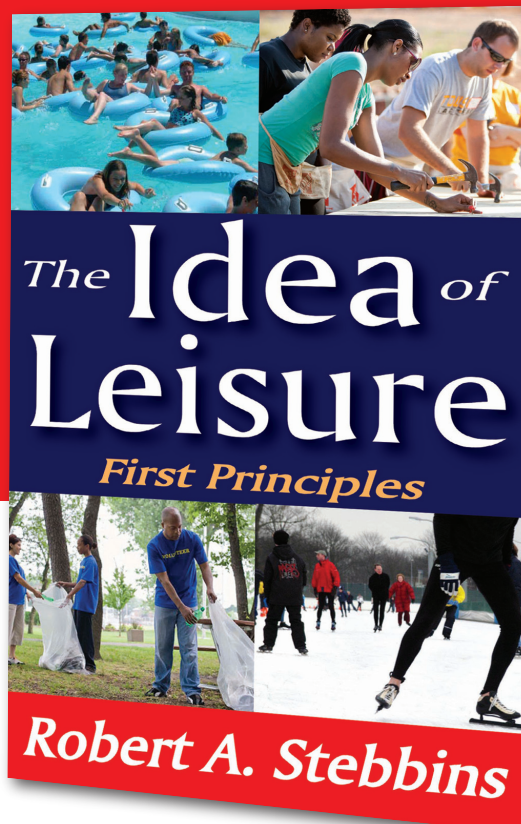
People are becoming progressively happier and enjoying an ever-improving quality of life, they say, mostly because they are putting their skills and reason to work. *The Idea of Leisure* is based on the assumption that leisure also fits into the social order, and it provides a singular vector by which to measure progress, even though it is rarely mentioned in writings about the idea of progress.

Robert A. Stebbins believes that leisure fosters positive development in both the individual and community. Progress through free-time activity may sometimes be hard to grasp because of the all-too-common manifestations of deviant behavior from schoolyard bullying to date rape. Despite these examples, the vast majority of leisure activities often have profound, positive consequences for participants and society. Stebbins makes a solid case for linking leisure with progress. Although leisure has huge importance for humanity, observations about the idea of leisure as part of the idea of progress have been sporadic. For whole nations to find satisfaction and self-fulfillment based on leisure would be a true sign of progress. Stebbins' book offers original insight into this basic human requirement.

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**Robert A. Stebbins** is a faculty professor in the department of sociology at the University of Calgary. Among his many books are *Leisure and Consumption*, *Serious Leisure and Nature*, *Personal Decisions in the Public Square*, *Between Work and Leisure*, and *Serious Leisure*.



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