

Postmodern Values and Leisure in Young Spanish University Students: An Exploratory Study

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This article reports exploratory research about tendencies toward postmaterialism in university students. This paper used the theoretical framework proposed by Inglehart regarding three categories of leisure: postmaterialist, materialist and common. Students from a Spanish university (N = 1036) completed questionnaires that evaluated their materialist-postmaterialist values, how often they practiced the activities included in each category of leisure and the motivational factors involved in them. The results revealed that university students showed a tendency toward postmaterialism. Further, relationships were found between materialist-postmaterialist values and categories of leisure. This study results suggested that the tendency toward postmaterialist values may be a factor in structuring the leisure patterns of young Spanish university students.

Keywords materialism, motivation, Postmaterialism Index, postmodernism, young people

During the second half of the 20th century, leisure practices were the subject of considerable debate regarding the economic, social, cultural and political transformation in advanced societies. The contours and conditions of postmodernity have been extensively debated (cf. Argyle, 1996; Featherstone, 1991; Lewis, 2003; Rojek, 1995, 2005). In particular scholars have asked whether the meanings and practice of leisure are influenced by the postmodern condition (Blackshaw, 2003; Lewis, 2003; Roberts, 1997; Rojek, 2000, 2005). Postmodern

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writers argue that postmodernity configures a new social order that contributes to a progressive transformation of ways of acting and thinking (Lyon, 1994) and that postmodern culture favors a critique of the great narratives of modernity, the assumed authority of science, and traditional reasoning and values (Lyotard, 1984; Vattimo, 2000). Thus, consensus exists around the idea of postmodernism as a new cultural order connected to social structure, which does not conform to the classic modernist patterns of social organization and cultural behavior (Jameson, 1991).

Researchers (Lewis, 2003; Roberts, 1997; Rojek, 1993a, 1993b, 1997, 2000; Slater, 1997; Stebbins, 2000) have proposed the emergence of new meanings of leisure under conditions of postmodernism. Lewis, for example, associated postmodernity with a blurring of clear lines that have traditionally separated work and pleasure. This idea suggests a transformation of the relationships between consumption, free time, and leisure. Other authors such as Águila (2005b) and Rojek (1995, 1997) related the loss of confidence in, and credibility of, reason with the fragmentation of leisure and its diverse practices in the period of postmodernity. In this paper, the word “reason” is used in a Weberian (1958) sense to point to a loss of confidence in the capacity of instrumental, formal *rationality* to solve society’s problems. Further, as Roberts (1997) observed through the idea of weakening group identities that were typical of modernity, leisure can be identified with the resurgence of individualism and subjectivity. Leisure is increasingly seen as a subjective construct underpinned by a plurality of definitions and meanings (Esteve, San Martín, & López 1999; Kelly, 1996) related to people’s individual characteristics and other psychosocial factors such as time, personal experiences and social/situational influences (Iso-Ahola, 1979, 1980). However, as Rojek (2005) suggested, recognizing that contemporary leisure has been influenced by the conditions of postmodernity is different from affirming that postmodern values inundate the entire sphere of leisure.

We agree with Inglehart (1977, 1990, 1997, 2003) that postmodernity is not conceived as a rupture with modernity but rather as a progressive change in cultural tendencies (Harvey, 1989; Jameson, 1991; Lyon, 1994). Therefore, while contemporary leisure can be related to postmodern values, individualism and fragmentation of leisure practices as well-structured inequalities still remain in leisure according to the more classically modernist social markers such as class, gender, race or occupational status (Águila, 2005b; Crook, Pakulski, & Waters, 1992; Rojek, 2005).

In the field of leisure research, the difficulty of conceptualizing and delimiting a clear borderline between the modern and postmodern condition has complicated the task of understanding the influences of economic and social transformation in culture, especially how people who are living those changes think and act. In this respect, the thesis proposed by Inglehart (1977, 1990, 1997) about the postmodern cultural turn in advanced societies serves as a useful starting point for investigating the relationship between leisure and postmodern values.

Background

According to Inglehart (1977, 1990, 1997), the rapid economic development and the expansion of the welfare state in advanced western societies that followed World War II has led to a fundamental shift in people’s value priorities, most notably among the younger generations born into this social and cultural configuration. More specifically, the values of western societies have been changing from an emphasis on material welfare and physical security (i.e., *materialist* values) toward a greater emphasis on self-expression (i.e., *postmaterialist* values). Based on Maslow’s (1954) theory of the hierarchy of human needs and the economic theory of decreasing marginal usefulness (Galbraith, 1958), Inglehart’s theory of

intergenerational value change rests on the principle that people tend to value and be more concerned about immediate needs or threats than apparently more distant “things” or things that do not appear threatening. Thus, economic, technological and sociopolitical changes in advanced industrial societies have brought about a progressive transformation in the incentives that motivate people to work; the issues that give rise to political conflicts; religious beliefs; attitudes toward divorce, abortion and homosexuality; and many other matters of daily life. At the same time, while some continuity with the elements of modernity can be observed, the postmodern cultural change tends toward the rejection of traditional modes of authority and a value shift toward a search for self-realization, respect for the environment and quality of life and the development of a personal sense of existence.

Inglehart (1977, 1990, 1997) argues that economic development, cultural change and political change come together in coherent and, to some extent, predictable patterns. The theory also implies that some trajectories of socioeconomic change are more likely than others (i.e., certain changes will be relatively foreseeable). The evidence accumulated so far indicates that pervasive changes are taking place in the basic values of advanced societies. Further, these changes seem to be linked with the intergenerational population replacement processes. This theory of intergenerational value change does not tend toward a direct relationship between the economic level and prevalence of postmodern values. Rather, the relationships between economics, politics and culture are mutually supportive.

Inglehart (1977) began looking for evidence of intergenerational value change cross-nationally in 1970. However, during the past 30 years further data taken from the World Values surveys indicated that a shift toward postmaterialist values is only one component of a broader postmodern cultural shift. Subsequent studies identified at least 40 factors involved in this shift (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995; Inglehart, 1997, 2003; Inglehart & Abramson, 1994; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Inglehart, Norris, & Welzel, 2002). These factors cover a variety of orientations from religious outlook to sexual norms. In addition, they all displayed large generational differences, were strongly correlated with postmaterialist values, and in most societies moved in a predictable direction from the 1980s onwards (Inglehart, 1997, 2003; Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Table 1 shows a selection of Inglehart's *associative* (not causal) findings concerning postmaterialism and a range of social variables over the last 30 years. Although Inglehart (1997) admits that the shift from materialist to postmaterialist values is not necessarily the most important component of the broader postmodern change, it is by far one of the most exhaustively documented.

Ironically, Inglehart's (1977, 1990, 1997, 2003) work represents a quintessentially positivist and even modernist approach to studying what he calls *postmodern* values. This obvious contradiction means that considerable caution must be exercised when drawing conclusions from his work as well as using his ideas for subsequent research. Along with Inglehart, as authors of this paper we are interested in identifying quantitatively broad cultural shifts so these shifts might be studied in more qualitative and contextually sensitive ways in the future.

Inglehart's theory (1977, 1990, 1997, 2003), especially the construction and validation of the Postmaterialism Index, serves as a useful basis for exploring the relationship between leisure and postmodern values for several reasons. First, the materialist-postmaterialist dimension constitutes one of the main indicators of cultural tendencies in advanced societies and is highly correlated to a country's economic development. Moreover, the change from materialist to postmaterialist values is well documented thanks to data obtained in transnational surveys taken regularly since 1970 (e.g., Abramson & Inglehart, 1995; Inglehart & Abramson, 1994). Second, although the postmodern cultural swing affects a large number of values, Inglehart goes to great lengths to demonstrate the *progressive* change in the materialist-postmaterialist dimension. That is, the trend toward postmaterialism would

TABLE 1 Variables Related to Postmaterialist Dimensions from the 1980s (Inglehart, 1997, 2003)

Variables	Postmaterialist People are ...
Age	Youngest
Occupational status	Those with higher status
Education	Those with the highest educational levels
Socioeconomic status	Those with highest incomes
Work expectancy	Those who pay less importance to money
Income	Those with the highest incomes
Importance of God	Those who put less importance in God in their lives
Religion	Unattached to organized religion
Thinking about meaning and purpose of life	The most likely to think about these issues
Civil norms	The most tolerant toward euthanasia, suicide, fighting with police and using marijuana
Socio-moral attitudes	The most tolerant toward abortion, divorce, homosexuality and extramarital sex
Cultural change	Those who accept change more easily
Political issues	Those who have more levels of political participation and readiness to undertake unconventional political action
Environmental issues	Those who are more supportive of environmental protection
Norms concerning authority	Those who place less emphasis on respect for authority (rational-legal and religious)

indicate the prioritization of self-expression and participation in public affairs to the detriment of material security. In this vein, the Postmaterialism Index reflects a straightforward, accessible and longitudinal gauge with high correlation to postmodern culture. Finally, in avoiding the idea of complete rupture with the past, the materialism-postmaterialism dimension can be seen as a continuum. This continuum enables discussion about cultural tendencies rather than sudden radical changes.

Inglehart's (1977, 1990, 1997) work on cultural change in advanced societies was used in this study to determine the degree to which young Spanish university students identified with postmaterialist values and to understand how certain leisure practices and motivational factors might be related to materialist and postmaterialist values. Inglehart's theoretical framework has been shown to be especially appropriate for the study of leisure in young people, since this generation is where the existence of postmaterialist values should be observed most clearly. Further, university students are a group of special interest for study since they have what Rodríguez and Agulló (1999) referred to as having specific educational capital that enables them to build a certain lifestyle of their own. University students have higher levels of education than other young people and, therefore, often occupy higher status social positions that provide them with a greater potential for influencing social and political decisions (Inglehart, 1977, 1997).

Finally, if university students as a group are influenced by postmodern values, and if they have internalized the main traits, then leisure should play an important role in their lives (Águila, 2005b; Bynner & Ashford, 1992; San Salvador, 2002). According to Inglehart's theory (1997), personal tastes for leisure options would conform not only to traditional divisions of sex, social class or age but also to perceived social transformations. The values associated with these tastes/social transformations could be defined as another dimension

of the segmentation of leisure in today's society. In this vein, we agree with researchers who argue that the overall picture of the relation between the social structure and the cultural composition of the leisure field has become more complex (e.g., Featherstone, 1991; Rojek, 1993b; Urry, 1990). Thus, we were interested in the way the materialist/postmaterialist continuum *may* structure leisure practices *in addition* to the classical patterns of class, gender, and ethnicity. Our exploratory study does not consider these latter patterns because they are unimportant, but because we seek to supplement existing understandings of the structuring factors.

Little evidence has been found that cultural values associated with postmodernity are a factor in structuring leisure. In a longitudinal study, Bynner and Ashford (1992) analyzed the relationships between British young people's leisure practices and their sociopolitical attitudes. Their attitudes were strongly related to gender, family background, school achievement and labor market experiences, but not with their leisure practices. Other researchers theorized about leisure experiences from a postmodern cultural perspective (e.g., Aguila, 2005a; Rojek, 1993a, 1993b, 1995). However, no research has shown a relationship between leisure and postmodern values. If such a relationship exists, it is most likely to be found in young people and especially young people with the highest level of education.

Studies on Spanish youth do not show evidence that their values are evolving toward postmaterialism (Del Pino, Duaso, & Martínez, 2001; Moral & Mateos, 2002). However, these studies have interpreted cultural change from analyses of diverse values such as personal confidence, tolerance and the importance of love, money and health. These factors are distinct from factors used by Inglehart (1977, 1997). Therefore, one possible explanation regarding why these studies have not found a cultural change may be the diversity and unsuitability of the measurement indicators used. In contrast, the change in cultural values in a postmaterialist direction has been demonstrated in the Spanish population by studies using the Postmaterialism Index (Díez, 1992; Fernández, 2003; Montero & Torcal, 1994; Torcal, 1989, 1992). Therefore, the main contribution of our study is that it explores the materialist-postmaterialist position of a group of young Spanish university students and its relationship with leisure practices.

Thus, this study has a double purpose. First, we attempted to determine whether Inglehart's (1977) hypothesis on the tendency toward postmaterialism was relevant for a sample of young students at the University of Almería. Second, we attempted to find out whether the materialist-postmaterialist dimension is related to leisure patterns. Specifically, the frequency of and motivational factors involved in the leisure activities of young Spanish university students were analyzed.

Method

Selection of Variables

Our starting hypothesis in this paper was that the population studied will present a tendency toward postmaterialism. Further, regarding our second purpose for this study, our hypothesis was that focusing on university students who exhibit the most extreme tendencies toward materialist and postmaterialist leisure as well as the frequency of and motivational factors involved in leisure activities will be related to the materialist-postmaterialist dimension. By extension, we expected that the activities and motivational factors included in the category of *common leisure* would not be related to this dimension.

For the purpose of studying the relationships between leisure and the materialist-postmaterialist dimension according to Inglehart's (1977) theory, the theoretical construct of three original categories of leisure have been used: postmaterialist leisure, materialist

leisure and common leisure. For each of these categories, three leisure activities and two motivational leisure factors have been considered. Data were gathered from university students concerning the frequency of their practice in the former and the importance they gave for the latter.

According to the first leisure category, the most postmaterialist profile should show more tolerant and open attitudes, be more interested in culture and in self-realization and participate in what might broadly be called political activities (Inglehart, 1977, 1990, 1997). Therefore, in the category of postmaterialist leisure, three corresponding activities were included: reading books, artistic activities and going to political meetings/associations. In addition, two motivational factors included the importance of freedom to choose leisure activities and cultural/educational features.

Our choice of activities was necessarily selective. The exploratory nature of this research and our desire to operationalize Inglehart's (1997) theories meant that our sampling of activities was driven by a theoretical rationale. This rationale was based around seven premises:

1. People who most frequently participate in artistic activities such as painting, composing music and writing demonstrate an interest in what we called "culture" and "self-development."
2. These practices fell within the "first state" of Neulinger's (1974) leisure paradigm. Neulinger's theory maintains that perceived freedom, motivation (i.e., intrinsic or extrinsic) and goals (i.e., instrumental or final) are the determining characteristics of leisure. His paradigm makes the distinction between six experiences along the dimensions of perceived freedom, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and instrumental/final goal. The first state represents activities freely chosen for their own sake (i.e., leisure experiences that require freedom from external control, bring intrinsic rewards and are an end in themselves).
3. Activities that prioritize an interest in culture and self-development are practices Kelly (1996) associated with "unconditional leisure." Similar to Neulinger, Kelly (1996) pointed out that unconditional leisure occurs when an activity is chosen for its own sake and for the intrinsic satisfaction of participation. Because the activity is likely to be exciting, personally expressive, creative, or emotionally fulfilling, the activity itself is the primary reason for doing it.
4. Stebbins (1982) associated these practices with "serious leisure." Stebbins argued that these activities are done with long-term benefits in mind as well as a sense of individual autonomy, self expression and personal identity.
5. These practices reflect a humanistic as opposed to instrumental view of leisure with the final purpose one of self-realization (Cuenca, 2000).
6. We suspected that young people who tend toward postmaterialism placed more importance on the cultural significance of their leisure activities.
7. Inglehart (1977, 1990, 1997) argued that the higher the tendency toward postmaterialism, the greater the interest in political issues. In this vein apart from a contribution to self, serious leisure is seen as making a contribution to community including participation by its members in activities that strengthen communal patterns of human and institutional interrelationships (Stebbins, 1996).

Postmaterialist leisure also included two motivational factors. First, in considering postmaterialist leisure according to Stebbins' (1982) notion of serious leisure, the idea of "personal development" emerged as an important motivating force behind cultural and/or educational leisure activities. Second, although freedom is widely reported as an important dimension of people's leisure generally (e.g., Argyle, 1996; Esteve et al., 1999; Iso-Ahola, 1979, 1980; Kelly, 1996; Neulinger, 1974), we expected people with highly postmaterialist

profiles and who prioritized personal development and individual participation in their social lives would give *more* importance to freedom in their leisure than people with highly materialist profiles. People in the latter group tend to prioritize more instrumental aspects of their actions.

We expected that materialist young people would prioritize material and economic security and give greater importance to tradition and formal rational authority (Inglehart, 1977, 1990, 1997). We also expected to see their leisure practices directed toward external purposes or simply as a diversion from normal life, and as a way of “switching off.” We have included in the category of materialist leisure three activities that we considered most instrumental and least focused on personal realization: extracurricular educational activities, use of the computer to chat or for class work and virtual games. We also included two motivational factors: importance of competition in leisure and the idea that activities do not demand high ability. A high frequency of these activities could reflect the use of leisure time toward external goals, and in this case toward improvement in academic or professional aptitude or using technology for academic purposes.

Regarding the motivational factors of materialism, giving a high importance to competition in leisure choices can reflect extrinsic motivation concerned with comparing oneself to others. Leisure that does not require a high level of ability and relates to practices that require low effort is what Stebbins (1997, 2001) called “casual leisure.” Contrary to serious leisure, casual leisure does not prioritize feelings of mastery. In these pursuits where the rewards are immediate, sheer enjoyment as well as leisure may have less potential for what could be called personal development. Similarly, Esteve et al. (1999) pointed out a dimension called “effort level” within the concept of leisure when Spanish university students were asked to express what they felt when they are involved in a leisure activity. The poles of this dimension conveyed two conceptions or visions of leisure that matched up, respectively, with Stebbins’ casual leisure and serious leisure. The first, which represented a low effort level, was associated with a popular idea of leisure such as barely organized activities, resting, and doing nothing. The other pole of the effort level dimension revealed a picture of leisure associated with challenges, a certain amount of discipline, and personal growth (Esteve et al., 1999).

The third category of leisure, common leisure, is made up of prototypical activities of young people such as watching television, going to bars/drinking and being with friends. We expected these activities would not be related to the materialist-postmaterialist dimension since they are practices well established in Spanish youth for the last 25 years (Aguinaga et al., 2005; Águila, 2005b; Comas et al., 2003; Rodríguez & Agulló, 1999). In this category of leisure, two motivational factors were included, which were also expected to be valued independently of the persons who are materialist or postmaterialist. These factors included the importance of leisure with friends and leisure involving amusement. According to studies of the leisure of youth, both factors seem to be priorities among most young people (Águila, 2005b; Comas et al., 2003; Pavón, Moreno, Gutiérrez, & Sicilia, 2003; Roberts, 1997).

Sampling Participants

The population studied included 12,366 undergraduate students at the University of Almería in Spain. The sample was composed of 1,036 Spanish students (62% females and 38% males) under 30 years old with an average age of 20.9 years ($SD = 2.206$). The sampling error was $\pm 3.2\%$ with a confidence level of 95.5% ($p = q = 0.5$). Sampling was random multi-stage. In the first stage, selection was fixed proportional and stratified by colleges (i.e., 26% Economics Sciences; 8% Experimental Sciences; 3% Nursing; 12% Law; 31% Humanities & Educational Sciences; 20% High Technical College) and later, random by

clusters of classes taken from the various years and courses of studies in each college. Finally, the questionnaire was given to everyone in each cluster.

Variables

The data collecting instrument was a questionnaire designed specifically for this study that included the variables that were the subject of this work. The leisure variables included the activities and motivational factors grouped by the theoretical categories of leisure proposed in this work.

a) *Postmaterialist leisure*

- *Prototypical activities*: going to political meetings/associations; reading books; artistic activities (painting, writing, photography).
- *Motivational factors*: freedom to choose leisure activities; personal development.

b) *Materialist leisure*

- *Prototypical activities*: extracurricular educational activities (language classes, information technology classes.); activities on the computer (chatting, class work); virtual games (console, computer).
- *Motivational factors*: competitive; activities do not demand high ability.

c) *Common leisure*

- *Prototypical activities*: watching television; going to bars/drinking; being with friends
- *Motivational factors*: with friends; fun

Each participant was asked how often he/she does each of the prototypical activities, with the choices: never/hardly ever, once in a while/on vacation, several times a month, once a week/weekends, three or four times a week, and every or almost every day. Participants were asked how important each of the motivational factors is to them with the choices: not important at all, a little, rather important, very important.

Inglehart's Postmaterialism Index (1997) was used as the measure of the materialist-postmaterialist dimension. This scale included three questions inquiring about the mid-term social goals the participants prioritized for their country. Thus, the participants were presented with a total of 12 social goals in groups of 4, and they were asked to indicate the 2 in each group they considered a priority. Five of the 12 social goals reflected postmaterialist values:

- (a) Seeing that people have more to say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities,
- (b) Giving people more say in important government decisions,
- (c) Protecting freedom of speech,
- (d) Progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society, and
- (e) Progress toward a society in which ideas count more than money.

The Postmaterialism Index offered a continuum of scores that went from zero (i.e., minimum postmaterialism, none of the five postmaterialist items was given high priority) to five (i.e., maximum postmaterialism, all five of the postmaterialist items were given high priority).

Although the metric properties of this scale have already been tested elsewhere (e.g., Rojas & Fernández, 2000), a specific study was done to estimate the scale's reliability. A total of 168 students in different groups and courses of studies that did not form part of the field sample were subjected to a design reliability estimation test-retest. The correlation

found between the test score and the retest score was .86, which showed a good estimated reliability coefficient for the Postmaterialism Index. Other work has shown evidence of validity (i.e., correlational studies) in favor of using this scale for measuring postmaterialism (e.g., Fernández & Rojas, 2003).

Procedure

Data collection was carried out during March and April 2003 during the beginning of the second semester and after first semester exams had ended. Clusters were selected at random from the various courses of study and years, and questionnaires were given to the group during class time.

Analysis

A purpose in this study was to determine whether the materialist-postmaterialist dimension was related to leisure patterns. We chose to focus on university students who exhibited the most extreme tendencies towards materialist and postmaterialist leisure categories for this paper. Thus, we focused on comparing the scores on the Postmaterialism Index between the group who reported doing particular leisure activities very frequently and the group who reported doing these activities least frequently. A similar approach was followed for motivational factors. Because we used variables with ordered response categories, extreme groups were created where the participants were grouped as a function of their responses (i.e., high or low). Thus, extreme groups analysis was a procedure used to dichotomize students according to their self-reported frequencies of leisure practices and motivational factors.

The extreme groups research strategy used a two-stage measurement procedure. This strategy is related to the selection of upper and lower groups for item discrimination analysis (Kelley, 1939) and to the treatments-blocks design in which participants are first “blocked” on the X variable, and then only the extreme (i.e., highest and lowest means) blocks are compared on the Y variable usually by a t test or an analysis of variance (Fowler, 1992).

In this study the extreme groups strategy allowed us to analyze and compare scores for research participants who reported doing particular leisure practices most frequently and least frequently and for research participants who reported giving high importance to particular motivating factors and those who reported giving low importance to these factors.

Having formed these extreme groups for frequency of leisure practices and importance of motivational factors, a comparison of Postmaterialism Index means of both groups (i.e., high and low in frequency of leisure activities, on one hand, and, high and low importance given to the motivational factors of leisure, on the other) was carried out. The t-test for independent samples was used to determine whether the groups differed significantly in their postmaterialism measure.

Results

Scores on the Postmaterialism Index

The results found in this study show a mean sample score of 3.19 points (*SD* 1.22) in a range of 0 to 5, which indicates a tendency toward postmaterialism. This tendency is more clearly illustrated in the distribution of the scores shown in Figure 1. Of the sample, 73% scored three or higher on postmaterialism.

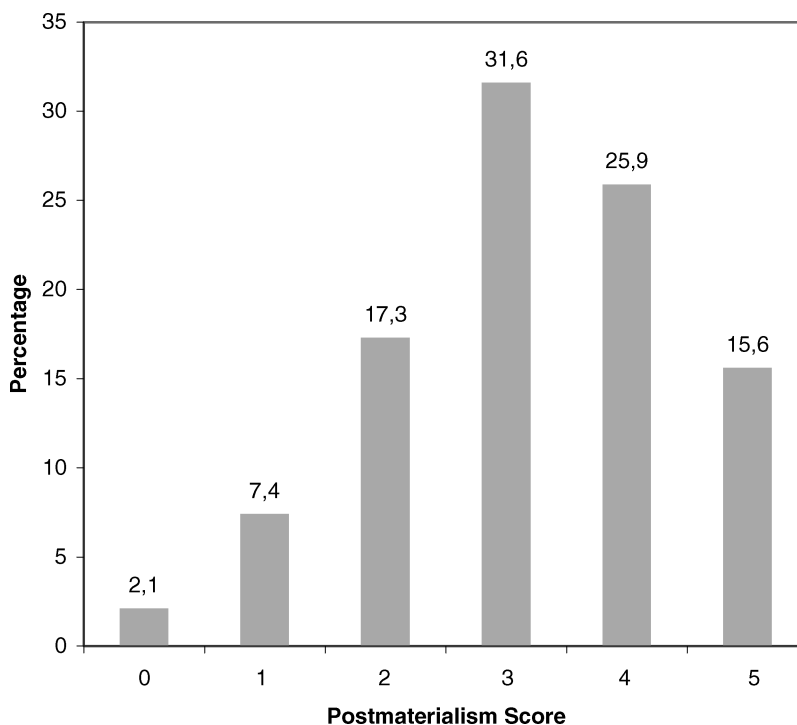


FIGURE 1 Distribution of scores on the Postmaterialism Index.

Frequency of Leisure Practices and the Materialist-postmaterialist Dimension

To determine differences in participant scores on the Postmaterialism Index regarding the frequency of the nine leisure activities asked, two extreme groups of persons were formed: First, the Low Group 1 included students who answered never/almost never or once in a while/on vacation; second, the High Group 1 included students who answered three or four times a week or every/almost every day. For both groups in each activity the mean was estimated on the Postmaterialism Index and was tested by the means between both groups

The results shown in Table 2 give the statistically significant differences in the measurement of postmaterialism between the two groups in five activities. High Group 1 had a mean postmaterialism higher than Low Group 1 in the following activities: artistic, reading books, and going to political meetings/associations. However, the High Group 1 has a lower mean postmaterialism than the Low Group 1 in computer activities and virtual games. No statistically significant differences between the two groups were found in educational activities, watching television, going to bars, drinking or being with friends.

Motivational Factors of Leisure and the Materialist-postmaterialist Dimension

To determine differences in the score on the Postmaterialism Index by importance of motivational factors involved in the leisure activities, two similar groups were formed: Low Group 2 included students who answered not at all and not very important, and High Group 2 included individuals who answered rather and very important. Later, the mean postmaterialism scores of the two groups were checked against each other.

Of the six factors presented to the participants, no statistically significant differences were found between the two groups in three areas (see Table 3): freedom to choose the activity, cultural and/or educational and competitive.

TABLE 2 Frequency of Leisure Activities according to the Postmaterialism Index

Activity	Frequency	Postmaterialism		df	t	P
		Mean	s.d.			
Watching television	Low Group	3.47	1.07	945	1.87	.062
	High Group	3.17	1.23			
Going to bars, drinking	Low Group	3.26	1.38	241	.50	.621
	High Group	3.17	1.23			
Being with friends	Low Group	3.04	1.40	739	-.62	.536
	High Group	3.19	1.22			
Reading books	Low Group	3.06	1.24	746	-3.39***	.001
	High Group	3.36	1.20			
Artistic activities	Low Group	3.09	1.24	814	-3.95***	.000
	High Group	3.52	1.14			
Going to political meetings, associations	Low Group	3.17	1.21	962	-2.02*	.044
	High Group	4.17	.75			
Extracurricular educational activities	Low Group	3.23	1.22	903	.93	.355
	High Group	3.11	1.18			
Activities on computer (Class work, chatting)	Low Group	3.33	1.10	700	2.90**	.004
	High Group	3.05	1.28			
Virtual games	Low Group	3.35	1.19	760	4.78***	.000
	High Group	2.83	1.30			

* p ≤ 0.05 ; ** p ≤ 0.01; *** p ≤ 0.001

Recoded categories:

Low Group: Never or almost never/Occasionally-on vacation

High Group: Every or almost every day/Three or four times a week

TABLE 3 Motivational Leisure Factors According to the Postmaterialism Index

Factor	Importance	Postmaterialism		df	t	P
		Mean	SD.			
It's fun	Low Group	3.00	1.58	1014	-.362	.718
	High Group	3.20	1.22			
With friends	Low Group	3.07	1.40	1020	-1.04	.301
	High Group	3.21	1.20			
Cultural, educational	Low Group	3.00	1.19	1009	-4.05***	.000
	High Group	3.32	1.23			
Freedom to choose it	Low Group	2.57	1.19	1020	-2.87**	.004
	High Group	3.22	1.22			
Activities don't demand high ability	Low Group	3.17	1.23	1017	-0.920	.358
	High Group	3.25	1.21			
Competitive	Low Group	3.33	1.20	1018	3.61***	.000
	High Group	3.05	1.23			

* p ≤ 0.05; ** p ≤ 0.01; *** p ≤ 0.001

Recoded categories

Low Group: Not important at all or a little important

High Group: Rather or very important

These results suggested that High Group 2 was more postmaterialist than Low Group 2. High Group 2 was more motivated by the freedom to choose and cultural and/or educational dimensions were seen as rather important or very important in leisure activities. On the other hand, High Group 2 was less postmaterialist than the Low Group 2 for the motivational factor that the activity be competitive. No significant differences were found in the factors concerning that it is fun, that it be with friends, and that activities do not demand high ability.

Discussion

This study had two purposes. The first was to find out whether Inglehart's (1977, 1990, 1997, 2003) hypothesis on the tendency toward postmaterialism was relevant in a sample of young university students. Results showed a mean score closest to the postmaterialist extreme among the sample of young university students, which was in agreement with Inglehart's idea that young people with higher educational level tend to show postmaterialist values. According to this theory, the increase in material well-being would serve as a basis for the emergence of other more personal values. The theory suggests that the subjective levels of well-being perceived by people would respond in part to the changes in the socioeconomic environment in which they live. Nevertheless, in the Inglehart model, the existence of a material basis is matched with a cultural and socialization component. That is, the values would always reflect a subjective feeling and not directly reflect their economic level. This possibility would explain why our data did not show a total absence of materialism among young university students, but that participants were positioned at a point nearer the postmaterialist end of the continuum of this dimension. Although this research is the first to test Inglehart's ideas with Spanish university students, other studies of the Spanish population have demonstrated a stable and congruent cultural change in a postmaterialist direction (Díez, 1992; Fernández, 2003; Montero & Torcal, 1994; Torcal, 1989, 1992) showing that young people scored closest to the postmaterialist end.

The second purpose of this study was to determine whether the materialist-postmaterialist dimension was related to the frequency of certain leisure activities and motivational factors related to them. Based on the three leisure categories proposed in this study, the results confirmed our hypothesis on the frequency of leisure activities.

We found relations between the score on the Postmaterialism Index and self-reports of the three activities included in the category of postmaterialist leisure. Students who self-reported doing the three postmaterialist leisure activities (i.e., reading books, going to political meetings/associations, and artistic activities) more often had higher scores on the Postmaterialism Index. These results were partially consistent with Inglehart's (1977, 1997) thesis since the participants that scored highest on the postmaterialist dimension showed the strongest tendency to prioritize goals related to personal development and creativity as well as reported more interest in participating in political associations or meetings. The activities in this study classified as postmaterialist leisure were in line with the preferences noted by Inglehart. In particular, the group who reported going more frequently to political associations or meetings gave priority to postmaterialist social goals with a mean score on the Postmaterialism Index. Further, the postmaterialist leisure category in this study was defined in line with an extreme position on a dichotomized leisure continuum framework, which would be well represented by Stebbin's (1987) serious leisure, the first state of Neulinger's (1974) leisure, or Kelly's (1996) unconditional leisure. Thus, these findings suggested that the leisure of students who had a higher position on the postmaterialist continuum were likely to report activities that were done as an end in themselves with long-term benefits in mind and to help people build their personal identity.

Conversely, university students who reported doing activities in the category of materialist leisure (i.e., using the computer for work and chatting and virtual games) most often had a lower score on the scale, although the performance of one of the activities we considered to be materialist leisure (i.e., extracurricular educational activities) did not reflect statistically significant differences. Participants who reported lower postmaterialist values gave a higher priority to goals tending to cover their more immediate needs, whether economic or physiological (Inglehart, 1977, 1997). Activities such as the use of the computer classified in this study as materialist leisure were in line with covering an immediate need (i.e., chatting or handing in class work). Similarly, the high frequency of participation in virtual games suggested a kind of leisure in line with the Stebbin's (1997, 2001; Esteve et al., 1999) casual leisure, which is not much organized and is used to escape or switch off.

However, extracurricular educational activities suggested in our hypothesis as typical of materialist leisure may have been proposed in an excessively open manner, particularly for this particular population. Perhaps extracurricular educational activities are now a widely established practice among university students in general. Even when formal learning activities and leisure have been viewed as related but separate domains in the life of university students and when the formal and informal components are segregated (Munson & Widmer, 1997; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1991; Tinto, 1987), our results suggested that the blend of these domains could be understood differently depending on what values (i.e., materialist or postmaterialist) students gave priority to. For example, materialist people could accentuate the use of extracurricular educational activities to get a certification and complement their degree, while postmaterialist people might give priority to formative aspects by using extracurricular educational activities to complement the learning process. Sivan's (2003) study showed that students who are involved in group activities with strong social bonding tend to blur the distinction between the learning and leisure domains, while other students define leisure as conflicting with learning and use leisure activities as an outlet of stress from their academic learning. Therefore, extracurricular educational activities cannot show the intention or goal for pursuing them, so these activities could have been prioritized by subjects with either strong materialist or postmaterialist values. This explanation may show why no significant differences were found regarding the materialist-postmaterialist dimension.

This study also showed that certain motivational factors associated with leisure practices are related to the materialist-postmaterialist dimension. Specifically, the motivational factors included in the category of postmaterialist leisure (i.e., freedom to choose the activity and personal development) were valued more by university students who had a higher score on the Postmaterialism Index. These results are consistent with Inglehart's (1977, 1990, 1997) thesis, since the subjects who stood out for their postmaterialist values reported more concern for autonomy and personal development, which was in line with the humanistic leisure perspective (Cuenca, 2000) or the characteristics of Stebbin's (1982) serious leisure. Although perceived freedom is a factor that characterizes all leisure experiences (Argyle, 1996; Esteve et al., 1999; Iso-Ahola, 1979, 1980; Kelly, 1996; Neulinger, 1974), from Kelly's theory this factor should be seen as a continuum. People will experience different kinds of leisure depending on the amount of free choice they have and the motivational meaning (i.e., intrinsic or social meaning). Thus, according to Kelly, unconditional leisure will involve a great deal of freedom of choice and is done for intrinsic reasons, while role-determined leisure has minimal freedom of choice and is done for social reasons. In the same way, our findings suggested that people with highly postmaterialist profiles, and who prioritized personal development and individual participation in their social lives, gave *more* importance to freedom in their leisure than individuals with highly materialist profiles. In this sense, freedom to choose leisure activity seemed to be a factor more consistent with postmaterialist values.

Likewise, among the motivational factors associated with the materialist leisure, the results showed that university students scored “the activity should be competitive” lowest on the scale of prioritization of their leisure choices. Participants who tended towards materialist values were usually guided by more pragmatic goals that allowed them to cover their most immediate needs. Thus, competition in the activity one is performing seemed to be a factor more consistent with a materialist orientation. However, the second factor in this category, “activities do not demand high ability,” showed no significant differences. From our theoretical framework we hypothesized a connection between ability and effort level. Thus, we hypothesized that people who had a materialist profile would not prioritize ability when choosing their leisure practices according to the casual leisure of Stebbins (1997) and one of the leisure dimensions (i.e., effort level) in Esteve et al.’s (1999) study. Our findings did not support the relationship between effort level perceived and ability that we assumed. Further studies could explore this possible relationship and its connection with dimensions of leisure practices.

Our study also demonstrated that a group of self-reported leisure practices and motivational factors was not affected by the predisposition for materialist or postmaterialist values. Specifically, the three activities we classified as common leisure (i.e., watching television, going to bars/drinking, being with friends) did not show statistically significant differences according to the score on the Postmaterialism Index. In the same vein, the motivational factors in the category of common leisure (i.e., fun and being with friends) as expected were not related to the materialist-postmaterialist dimension. This finding seems plausible since these factors are wide spread practices among the young population (Aguinaga et al., 2005; Águila, 2005b; Bynner & Ashford, 1992; Comas et al., 2003; Pavón et al., 2003; Roberts & Fagan, 1999; Roberts, 1997; Roberts & Parsell, 1994; Rodríguez & Agulló, 1999). The popularity of those practices among the population in general could explain their independence from the cultural attitudes and values of the participants.

Our results suggest that Inglehart’s (1977, 1990, 1997) thesis may be useful in explaining the differences in the way leisure is understood and practiced in advanced western societies. As shown inside and outside Spain, a relationship exists between the materialist-postmaterialist dimension and the degree of development of socioeconomic structures that affect the creation of postmodern values (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995; Fernández, 2003; Inglehart, 1977, 1997; Inglehart & Abramson, 1994; Montero & Torcal, 1994; Torcal, 1989, 1992). Nevertheless, the relationship between social structures and the formation of subjectivities is complex, since a person showing high values on the Postmaterialism Index may be explained both by her/his socioeconomic conditions and by exposure to specific ways of seeing the world that are inculcated by communications and socialization networks. According to the theory of marginal usefulness, Inglehart (1977, 1997) defended the idea that when people acquire a socially valued object, they usually experience a transitory subjective feeling of well-being. However, after this period of euphoria the person may want more, or rather consider that she/he has reached a saturation point, in the acquisition of material goods. Then, the person will be inclined toward the pursuit of other goals. People who tend toward postmaterialism are not nonmaterialist or anti-materialist. In advanced societies people may be materialist and not necessarily reject material welfare. However, once they have secured their well-being, those who tend toward postmaterialism will give priority to self-expression and quality of life as desirable social goals. Thus, the leisure differences among university students should be interpreted as the self-report of cultural tendencies toward materialism or postmaterialism instead of exclusive or definitive positions. In other words, postmaterialism should be understood within a layering idea or going beyond materialism, rather than as dichotomised positions.

Conclusion

Researchers have traditionally studied the classical patterns of class, gender, or ethnicity and their impact on the leisure practices of young people (e.g., Fredric & Shaw, 1995; Hollands, 1995; Roberts & Fagan, 1999; Roberts & Jung, 1997; Virden & Walker, 1999). However, apart from a few exceptions (e.g., Bynner & Ashford, 1992), no studies have analyzed the relationships between young people's leisure patterns and cultural values. Consequently, so far no evidence relates cultural values and young people's leisure. Assuming the limitations of this study, and given its exploratory nature and transversal character, our findings showed that socio-political attitudes of young people measured through the materialist-postmaterialist dimension are related to leisure patterns. Thus, the associations that our research presented among certain patterns of leisure and the materialist-postmaterialist dimension constitute the main contribution of this study. Therefore, we consider this research an advance in the attempt to relate the practices of leisure and their meanings to the global framework of sociocultural and economic characteristics of advanced western societies.

Inglehart (1977, 1990, 1997) pointed out that more postmaterialist people usually attribute greater importance to leisure than people who tend toward materialism. However, the materialist-postmaterialist dimension admits different positions on the scale. According to our study, the two positions would be related to a different type of leisure. Leisure is a priority for the majority of Spanish young people (Aguinaga et al., 2005; Águila, 2005b; Comas et al., 2003; Rodríguez & Agulló, 1999), but according to our findings there also was a preference in their performance. Leisure can have a materialist slant reflecting a more instrumental nature that is differentially conditioned and more focused on purpose or a postmaterialist slant, which is more creative, self-conditioned, done alone and focused on self-realization. Therefore, the tendency toward materialism or towards postmaterialism may be considered a factor for segmentation of the patterns of leisure, allowing a line of research to be begun linking the leisure of young people to the cultural signs of advanced western societies.

In conclusion, the findings of our study suggested that in addition to the possible classical patterns of class, gender and ethnicity, values associated with materialist-postmaterialist dimension are a dimension of the segmentation of leisure in today's society. In line with Rojek (2005), we admit that many modernist forms of authority and power determine access to leisure and other resources. However, the transformation of cultural dimensions, which has happened in advanced western societies, also has a bearing on the development of identity and, consequently, leisure choices. Therefore, our study suggests that considering cultural values as a potentially structuring factor in leisure patterns would contribute to a deeper understanding of leisure in our societies.

Nonetheless, some limitations of this study should be noted. First, the study was non-experimental, so we cannot know whether certain university students' cultural attitudes and values have made them incline toward certain leisure patterns or whether some leisure practices have contributed to the construction of a cultural values tending toward postmaterialism. Further, we acknowledge that we have studied leisure patterns related to self-reported practices. Being exploratory by nature, the study has helped to better understand the relationship between certain patterns of leisure and the materialist-postmaterialist dimension. Although the identification of the different patterns of leisure according to materialist or postmaterialist values is of value, more research should be undertaken to examine the factors affecting different leisure patterns and how they affect different populations. For instance, in this study we did not find differences between materialist and postmaterialist profiles according to their frequency of extracurricular educational activities. However, further studies could explore whether extracurricular educational activities fit better with a materialist leisure pattern among nonuniversity young people and, consequently, if these

activities are a means of social mobility. In addition, employing longitudinal studies would be helpful to assess the stability of connections between the socio-political attitudes that the materialist-postmaterialist dimension represents and leisure patterns. Therefore, researchers of leisure in young people should be aware of time cycles, political, economic, and cultural changes in societies as well as changes in the dimension of youth itself. Further, the relationships between leisure patterns and other cultural values should also be analyzed in future research. This exploratory quantitative study represents a beginning. Further qualitative study informed by these results should follow to better understand subjectivity through leisure practices. In doing so, leisure research could change the subject of investigation from *behavior* to *meanings* or, even better, complement what people *are seen to do* or *report to do* with *why* they do it.

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