

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to a historian studying the changing leisure opportunities in Wales and England in the period from 1930 to 1937. [30]

General context of the period

- By 1930, there had been undoubted developments in leisure opportunities in Britain. Social change in Britain by 1930 meant that people had more leisure time and developments in industry leading to more entertainment opportunities. This was a development that would continue well into the 1930s.
- About 1.5 million people were entitled to paid holidays in 1930, but this had risen to 11 million by 1939 and the leisure industry grew exponentially in order to cater for the new market and opportunities that came hand in hand with such a development.
- Transport by 1930 had developed greatly, and people knew much more about the world through the increasing popularity of the radio and cinema as a lens through which to view the wider picture of life in Britain. This led to migration from Wales and as the employment situation worsened, migration from Wales was seen on a scale never seen before.
- Traditional values in some people's view had been eroded by these new developments and it was not welcomed by all. Many felt the core values of British society like religion and the importance of the family were being side-lined.
- The economic depression in the early years of the 1930s struck Wales and England to varying degrees, with the North of England and South Wales being hit the worse. Unemployment in the UK had reached nearly 3 million by 1932, but this distorted the truer picture of regional effects where some areas suffered far more than others. In South Wales, unemployment hit areas such as the Rhondda Valleys badly and they participated in the 1932 hunger marchers which were seen all over Wales and England. This was mirrored in the North of England where traditional Industrial towns were being battered by the worse effects of the depression.
- The Government response to the economic collapse was hardly progressive. The UAB Means Test was introduced in 1931. This was to prove very unpopular and gave the impression of an uncaring government. The Special Areas Act of 1934 and 1936 gave certain areas a respite, but government response was often too little too late.
- However, whether playing or watching sport, it was a fun activity that offered an escape to many from normal life. Physical and emotional expression through leisure opportunities gave a sense of purpose, a feeling of belonging which made many forget the hardship they felt in their everyday life. Sport was not expensive and, for the most part, the majority of people could take advantage of this flourishing new industry.
- People's experiences during the 1930s was not homogenous as some parts of Britain did not suffer the worst of the depression. In the areas of southern England, the popularity of leisure activities such as football and cricket increased. By 1934, there were also 320 cinemas in Wales alone and people would flock to the cinema to see their favourite Hollywood idols.
- Holiday time had become increasingly important. By the late 1930s, seaside visits numbered around the 20 million mark and the rise of Butlin's holiday camps gave many the opportunity for extended family holidays. Of course, much of this was fuelled by the development in the transport industry.
- Although the cost of living was rising by 1937, it was at a lower rate than wages. This meant that for the middle and upper classes, their money went further. Higher wages and shorter working hours went hand in hand with the development of the new leisure activities. Powered by the media and advertising, leisure activities became more popular.
- By 1937, Wales and England were over the worst of the depression. However, as rearmament started, the prospect of another war loomed large.

Key:

Values

Limitations

Other points of note

Summary of points, including:

- notes on the sources and their attributions/provenances
- notes on the specific context of the sources

Source A: Reverend Henry Price, a Methodist Minister in South Wales, in a sermon published in a religious pamphlet 'Y Machlud' (The Dawning', 1930)

Mass production has allowed cars to be manufactured at even cheaper prices and a basic car can now be bought for £100. This has altered the way of life of large sections of the population, and the advent of the lorries, the

- From a sermon preached to a congregation in South Wales, it would provide a religious view on the dangers of changing leisure opportunities.
- This gives a view of a Methodist minister of developments in a particular area of Wales, at a particular moment of time, published in a religious pamphlet. It looks at the negative impact of changing leisure opportunities on traditional values and beliefs.

coaches, the buses and the vans will have an impact on society in unimaginable ways. Now we hear about the Sunday afternoon drive rather than the Sunday school visit, we hear young people talking about which clothes to wear, which holiday resort they would like to visit, and the advent of the new women's League of Health and Beauty is an attack on women's primary concern, which should be their husbands and children. We dreamed of a world in which the lower classes would no longer gamble, drink or spend hours in the new picture houses and dance halls but alas we find ourselves in a world teeming with carefree attitudes so far removed from the true meaning of Christianity that one wonders where this will all end. The calamitous situation in the United States is a warning for us all to turn away from frivolous behaviour lest we all be punished and our downfall be twice as hard.

Source B: An interview with an unemployed woman from Manchester published in the Daily Mirror, a paper that was popular with the working class (1932)

On the whole, my husband has worked about one year out of eight and a half. His face was lovely when I married him, but now he is skin and bones. When I married he was strong and he had a good job. He was earning eight to ten pounds a week. Then he fell out of work, so I've hardly known what a week's wage was. We don't waste anything and there's no enjoyment comes out of our money – no pictures, no papers, no sport. We hear of all the new opportunities, we know all about the cinema, the flea pits, the boxing, football and pools. All that is meaningless for us. To have a holiday, you have to have a job so our enjoyment is non-existent you see, an empty word, something you long for but know you can never achieve.

Source C: George Orwell, a socialist and social investigator who travelled around Northern England, writing in his social survey The Road to Wigan Pier (1937)

It is now clear that, following nearly a decade of depression, the two things that have probably made the greatest difference of all to people's lives are the movies and the mass production of cheap smart clothes. A youth of 20 for £2, 10s. [£2.50] on hire purchase can buy himself a suit. The girl can

- Note the date. The worst effects of the depression are still to be felt and the Minister sees developments in leisure as a negative. This may not reflect his views later in the 1930s, when the solace and joy leisure opportunities afforded to people who were suffering during the depression was more apparent.
- The tone: negative view of leisure developments *"a warning for us all to turn away from frivolous behaviour."*
- Traditional views about society still prevailed with some seeing the advent of the media as having a negative effect on women: *"the new women's League of Health and Beauty is an attack on women's primary concern, which should be their husbands and children."*
- Religious view: dogmatic, alludes to the popularity of leisure activities which shows that the religious view is not indicative of the views of the majority in society in 1930.
- Tone is very negative and cannot see any positives in the development of leisure opportunities, warning in fact that there will be a reckoning for indulging in such behaviour. The Wall Street Crash is seen as *"a warning for us all to turn away from frivolous behaviour."*

- This source is from an interview with an unemployed woman from Manchester that was published in a popular working-class paper in 1932, at the height of the depression.
- A regional, if not urban, view of life during the depression and does not reflect the experiences of all people from all walks of life in Wales and England at the time.
- Date indicates that this was written at the height of the depression in an industrial Northern city.
- Reference to *"we hear of the new opportunities"* implies knowledge of leisure developments and a desire to be able to take part in them, but economic difficulties means that the unemployed woman and her family cannot partake in these leisure developments.
- Reference to her husband having only worked *"about one year out of eight and a half"* indicates long term unemployment and suffering. This alludes to the difficulties these people had when trying to take part in the new leisure activities. For this family, there was no social revolution and they are just plodding on as before.
- Author seems to be quite knowledgeable about the opportunities available which may lead to the assumption that they are reading or hearing about them through the media, but this is creating a sombre and miserable lifestyle, since they know what is out there and realise it is inaccessible to them.
- Vivid description of life on the dole - it is no wonder that leisure opportunities were to provide such a welcome diversion and why it had grown as such an exponential scale during the 1930s.
- Sombre and depressive tone, indicative of how many felt in this period and alludes to the fact that things might have been different if they were able to access these opportunities. This was a time of 'have' or 'have not' - this family is clearly on the wrong side of the depression: *"our enjoyment is non-existent"*.

- This source is from a social survey by the socialist sympathiser George Orwell who travelled around Northern England.
- A politically charged account, critical of the fact that the workers have been nullified by cheap luxury goods.
- The date is significant: by 1937 the worst effects of the depression were starting to dissipate, but its consequences can still be felt in the communities that suffered.
- Here is a more political spin on how developments in leisure opportunities have helped people to get

look like a fashion photograph at an even lower price. You may have three half pence in your pocket and not a prospect in the world, and only a corner of a leaky bedroom at home but, in your new clothes, you can stand on a street corner indulging in a private day-dream of yourself as a film star such as Clark Gable or Greta Garbo. **Twenty million people are underfed, but literally everyone in England has access to a radio.** What we have lost in food we have gained in electricity. Whole sections of the **working class who have been plundered of all they really need are being compensated by cheap luxuries.** Fish and chips, silk stockings, tinned salmon, cut price chocolate, the movies and **radio have between them averted revolution.**

- over the worst aspects of the depression. However, he does not seem happy about it as the tone is dismissive and critical.
- The author alludes to the importance of leisure activities - *"Twenty million people are underfed but literally everyone in England has access to a radio"*, clearly suggesting that an ownership of the radio has been more important than buying food for many individuals in Britain, something the tone of the work indicates the author is not happy about.
- Indicates that developments in leisure and other opportunities have meant that people have been *"compensated by cheap luxuries"* - yet again alluding to the importance of developments in leisure opportunities.
- This is very left-wing socialist view, is somewhat critical of people for selling themselves and ignoring their suffering for such frivolous leisure developments and fails to address the positives of changing leisure opportunities.

Keeping the question in mind, use the information above and identify similarities and differences between the sources. These may vary in number: you do not need to have an equal amount of each.

Similarities between the sources

Sources A, B and C consider the negative side of leisure developments. Source A sees it as a challenge to traditional values, Source B views it as a depressing aspirational goal and Source C sees it as a frivolous distraction from economic suffering that has somehow 'averted revolution'. All three allude to the popularity of leisure opportunities and how it is developing and changing.

Sources A, B and C indicate that the reaction to the development of leisure opportunities was not a positive one, at least in their view. However, it seems to be growing in importance among the general populace.

Sources A, B and C, despite being somewhat negative, allude to the fact that leisure opportunities were developing quickly, and that the population as a whole were being distracted by it.

Source A, B and C consider the developments in leisure opportunities to be having a wide ranging and large influence on the lives of the people of Wales and England.

Differences between the sources

Source A looks at the developments from a religious perspective, Source B from a social and economic perspective and Source C from an economic and political perspective.

Source A and Source C differ from Source B. Both Sources A and C are from the early part of the 1930s when leisure opportunities were still developing, while Source B is considering the full range of developments that has taken place by 1937.

Source A mentions how new leisure opportunities are changing traditional values and beliefs and Source C also mentions how people's priorities have changed in respect of what is important to them. Source B has a more traditional outlook about working class life having changed very little.

Sources A and C refer to the removal of economic barriers in respect of access to leisure opportunities. However, Source B clearly indicates that the economic barriers still prevented many from gaining access to the changing leisure opportunities.

Source C seems to confirm that the effects of changing leisure opportunities addressed in source A seem to have come to pass. However, Source B indicates that this was far from being a homogenous experience.

Now, outline and explain the value and limitations of the sources – both individually and collectively – to a historian studying the issue in the question. Remember to consider the general context of the period, your analysis of the sources and their provenances, identification of the specific content and identification of similarities and differences. Again, these may vary in number: you do not need to have an equal amount of each.

What is the value of the source or sources to a historian studying the changing leisure opportunities in Wales and England in the period from 1930 to 1937?

The most significant value of Source A to a historian studying changing leisure opportunities is that it shows how some people were wary of the changes and its effect on traditional values. It also shows how society was changing with the advent of mass production and improved transport infrastructure.

Why is this a value?

(include contextual material – specific or general – where necessary)

This gives the view of a Methodist minister of developments in a particular area of Wales at a particular moment of time that were published in a religious pamphlet. The worst effects of the depression are still to be felt and the minister sees developments in leisure as a negative. This may not reflect his views later in the 1930s, when the solace and joy leisure opportunities afforded to people who were suffering during the depression was more apparent. Religious leaders took full advantage of transport developments, organising Sunday School outings and day trips. They also capitalised on the growth in leisure activities by organising games and choirs. For some, the chapel was a way of visiting popular seaside resorts such as Barry Island and Porthcawl. Developments in transport allowed access to more leisure opportunities and the growth in fashion, sport, film and tourism was to benefit greatly from this, despite the author not being able or willing to recognise this or the economic benefits it brought. The source shows that attitudes were changing by 1930 and leisure opportunities are clearly having an effect on society's values even in 1930. However, Source A does not consider the positives that may come from changing leisure opportunities.

The most significant value of Source B is that it gives us a first-hand account of the limitations of the new leisure opportunities seen in England and Wales during this time. They were not available to all, with your economic situation and where you lived having an affect on your ability to partake in the new leisure opportunities.

This source is an account of the miserable state of the lives of some people at the height of the depression, where enjoying the new leisure opportunities was not possible to them because of their economic situation. This was written at the height of the depression. During this time, hunger marches were being organised and protests were being held against the means test and against the treatment of the unemployed by the Unemployment Assistance Boards. The industrial strongholds of Northern England and South Wales were hit hardest by the depression, with unemployment at 3m. However, regional unemployment levels were higher with Jarrow having unemployment levels as high as 75%. By 1932, people were having new opportunities in some areas and the author is aware of this. This shows that the experiences of the 1930s were not homogenous.

Source C, a social survey by George Orwell, gives insight into how new leisure opportunities had turned people's attention away from matters that would otherwise had caused them to feel agitated. This Source clearly indicates the importance of changing leisure opportunities on the lives of the people of Wales and England. The fact that this is happening in Northern England, an area which would have borne the brunt of the depression, indicates how important new leisure opportunities were in keeping people satisfied during a time that could have been contentious.

Being a social investigator, the author would have been an eyewitness to these changes as they unfolded in Northern England and it is likely that changes in that region were also happening elsewhere to various degrees. There is certainly historical data to support his observations about the popularity of new leisure opportunities when one looks at them in isolation to the political explanation he gives as to their effect. By 1937, when this work was published, changing leisure opportunities did mean that more people had ownership of cars which were increasingly popular. Radio ownership by 1937 was at nearly 9m sets and a constant stream of advertisement pushed the ideal of consumerism. The popularity of the cinema was at its peak with thousands of cinemas operating in Wales and England. Government legislation seems to confirm the authors assertions about the popularity of new leisure opportunities. The Physical and Recreation Act of 1937 built lidos and other leisure facilities for the populace while the Holiday Pay Act of 1936 meant that by 1937 20m people were visiting the seaside annually and holiday camps such as Butlins became the holiday destination of choice.

Of significant value is that the three sources, taken together, demonstrate the growing importance of leisure opportunities for people in England and Wales. By 1937, it had practically taken over people's lives.

The sources as a collection shows the fear some felt regarding the changes in leisure opportunities and how it would affect traditional values and beliefs that had defined life in England and Wales up to that point. The sources also show how, by 1937, it had actually really revolutionised the lives of people in England and Wales. Although access to leisure opportunities was affected by regional variations to some degree, the advent of leisure opportunities had even permeated areas previously suffering during the depression by 1937.

What are the limitations of the source or sources to a historian studying the changing leisure opportunities in Wales and England?

The most significant limitation of Source A for historians is that the extract is a personal religious viewpoint. We do not know if the views expressed in the source were widely accepted or shared during this time.

For Source B, the most significant limitation is that the Source is a first-hand account and therefore is a personal view of the effects of the depression in one area at a particular moment in time. There were differing experiences depending on an individual's economic and social situation, as well as regional variations at the time which would have caused a variety in the way changing leisure opportunities affected people's lives in England and Wales during this time.

Why is it a limitation?

(include contextual material – specific or general – where necessary)

The source was intended for a religious audience and as such it promotes religious belief and traditions rather than providing an informed view about the overall benefits to society of changing leisure opportunities.

As this source solely concentrates on Manchester, a historian would have to assume that similar experiences and views were shared elsewhere in Wales and England. In the non-industrialised regions of Wales and England, there was relative prosperity and the experiences of the 1930s were vastly different depending on where you lived and your employment status.

For Source C, the most significant limitation is that the social survey is of Northern England only and gives an account of the view of the social investigator on his travels around England. It is unlikely that it would be an in-depth treatment of the whole area and would also be heavily influenced by the writer's personal viewpoints on the benefits or negative effects of changing leisure opportunities.

We know that the author of the source is heavily influenced by his socialist tendencies. In addition to this, whether changing leisure opportunities has 'prevented revolution' in England and Wales during this time is up for debate and cannot really be proven. There was some sporadic political unrest during the 1930s involving Moseley's British Union of Fascists and the Communist Party of Great Britain, but these did not really have that much impact. Therefore, it is debatable whether the people of Wales and England were ever up for a 'revolution'.

In summary, what is the value of these sources to a historian studying the changing leisure opportunities in Wales and England?

Overall, all three sources are of some value to a historian studying the changing leisure opportunities in Wales and England during the period 1930-1937. Each one discusses effects of changing leisure opportunities on different people's lives. The fact that all three focus on the impact of changing leisure opportunities in a mostly negative tone shows that some opposed these changes. All three Sources allude to the fact that the opportunities available were both popular and progressively increasing in availability between 1930 and 1937. This was changing the way people lived their lives and undoubtedly would have an effect on people in diverse ways according to the sources - economically (new jobs available), socially (changing attitudes and more leisure time), politically (allegedly averting revolution), technologically (new appliances and mass production) and religiously (decline in religion). All three sources gives us a taste of how new leisure opportunities were influencing change in society.