

THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF LIFESTYLE IN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Kire Sharlamenov*, Jana Petreska**

Abstract: In the analysis of social stratification, relevant contemporary sociologists pay much more attention to lifestyle, than to traditional concepts of social classes and social strata. It is a reflection of the dynamics of modern society that develops much more complex stratification schemes that are analysed with a new categorical apparatus that includes lifestyle. This article aims to present the conceptualization of lifestyle in the theory of two classical authors in sociology, such as Thorstein Veblen and Max Weber and three contemporary sociologists, such as Pierre Bourdieu, Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. By analysing the concepts of these authors we will discover the evolution, characteristics and meaning of life style in different socio-historical contexts.

Keywords: Lifestyle, Stratification, Class, Status, Individualization, Lifestyle Policy

1. Introduction

The term 'lifestyle' in the social sciences began to be used in the 1930s, but for a time it was overshadowed by terms and concepts that were used in the same context as the term lifestyle, but which were considered more significant at that time. Such terms were social class, and social stratification. The term lifestyle became significantly more widely used and explored in the 1960s. (Jensen 2007: 1). Sorel (1981: 1) informs us that in the 1980s, the term 'lifestyle' was one of the most commonly used terms in the English language and was associated with different phenomena from Zen Buddhism to French culinary. That term was used in the social sciences, in journalism, by layman, and everyone associated it with things they were interested in. So the term "lifestyle" has begun to include more things and have less and less specific meaning.

The Latin term 'modus Vivendi' means lifestyle in terms of values and behaviour. Lifestyle is associated with the activities individuals have, the way they acquire certain values through activities, the way they acquire and express their individuality, the way they interact with separate social groups, the way they

* Kire Sharlamenov, corresponding author: sharlamenovk@gmail.com

** Jana Petreska, jana_petreska@yahoo.com

live their lives and exercise the right to freedom of choice. The activities, hobbies, behaviours that an individual has are reflected in the pattern of his or her behaviour, or the style in which that individual lives (Crompton 1998). Lifestyle is a pattern of life expressed through activities, interests and opinions. Lifestyle reflects how people self-actualize, accomplish, express, believe and fight for their interests (Kotler 2000). It includes views on politics, religion, health, etc. In the history of art, in defining lifestyle, they insert new criteria - distinctiveness and recognition. Thus, according to Sorel (1981: 3), in the history of art, lifestyle is defined as a distinctive and recognizable way of life. In the Dictionary of Sociology, Stevenson (2006: 339) defines life style as a distinctive pattern of action and culture that is separating people. Lifestyle refers to a variety of variables such as diet (how we eat), housing (where we live), and how we move (by bicycle, by car, by public transport, by foot), where we travel, how we dress in different occasions, health habits and beliefs, risk-taking. Healthy habits and beliefs include smoking (whether one smokes, how much and what kind of cigarette), drinking alcohol (whether one drinks, how much and what drinks), eating habits (how much and what we eat), etc. (Hakkin 2000: 1640)

While class is related to occupation, education, qualifications, income, wealth, ownership, some authors like Veal (2001) try to associate lifestyle with sub-cultures, such as surfers, youth subcultures, etc. However, according to Stevenson (2006: 339), many sociologists prefer to use the term lifestyle because, unlike subculture, it does not imply a difference from the dominant culture, but rather its dissemination into separate lifestyles. In fact, the term lifestyle is used to point out differences in the level of action that exist in a culture. Although the social significance of the class as a relevant topic in the social sciences in most developed countries is declining, Ulrich Beck, for example, concludes that in the social sciences there were much less research on social classes than before (Beck, Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 30), historically the options between which individuals could build their lifestyles depended on their place in the stratification system. With the socio-historical development, the growth of the standard of living of the citizens and the emancipation of a larger number of the population, the lifestyle begins to be separated from the social class i.e. from the location of individuals in the stratification system and increasingly dependent on other factors such as the geographical location of the individual, whether he lives in a village or town, the size and characteristics of the city, the personal preferences and tastes of individuals, etc.

2. Veblen's understanding of free class, social status, and lifestyle

In his Leisure Class Theory, Thorstein Veblen points out that there is a connection between social class, social status and lifestyle. The basic motivation that drives social action according to Veblen is the desire of individuals to be respected, that is, to have as high a social status as possible. Usually in the social sciences, the status of individuals is associated with the benefit they can produce for a large number of individuals or society at large. Veblen, however, points out that status is more related to symbolic than to the productive activities of individuals. It is commonly accepted that functionality is more important than form, but historically many forms have been found that did not produce comfort but were made to indicate the status of certain individuals in society. There are a myriad of artefacts that were more symbolic than functional, as they are today. For example, making huge cathedrals in cities where the standard of living is very low. The question of what the cathedral will look like is not just a question of functionality or comfort, but of social status (Fine 1994: 161).

According to Veblen, the very production of goods and services is not only intended to meet the needs of the citizens, but also to generate profits for the owners of the means of production. The industrial production system requires workers to be valuable, efficient and cooperative, and the owners of the means of production are preoccupied with making a profit and wealth and publicly displaying it. Veblen calls the class that deals with the question of how to increase their wealth a Leisure Class. This class is characterized by excessive consumption and apparent freedom. The forms of manifestation of freedom according to Veblen have existed from the time of barbarism to the present day.

Veblen criticized classical economic theories of the 19th century. They view individuals as rational agents who, through economic activities, seek to maximize satisfaction. According to Veblen, individuals are irrational economic agents, who are more concerned with their social status and prestige in society (class and stratum within their class) than with their happiness. According to Veblen, the emergence of ownership as a social institution is not so much related to the subsistence minimum as to the desire to distinguish from others by possessing wealth that other members of society cannot have (Veblen 1954: 14). In that respect, Veblen turns to Friedrich Nietzsche and his will for power. The will for power, as well as the will to acquire property, ultimately comes down to the desire not only to be respected but to be more respected than others, that is, to have as high a social status as possible.

According to Veblen, individuals' place in the stratification system is not based on the merits they have for the welfare of society or an institution, but on

the division of labour. The division of labour is based on the division of status groups. Here Veblen turns from head to toe, classical liberal as well as sociological (Durkheim's) theory of division of labour. According to Veblen, belonging to certain classes and statuses is not derived from the division of labour, but rather the division of labour is done so as to suit the interests of individuals possessing a certain social status. For example, sex division of labour (Veblen 1954: 7). The higher social status of men is not a product of the division of labour, but on the contrary, men as a physically stronger and economically dominant group impose their interest, thereby enforcing gender segregation. Historically, people with higher social status are engaged in occupations that require less work, leave them more free time, are more paid, respected and do not have to be more productive for the whole society. For example, in earlier societies individuals with higher status were engaged in hunting and military affairs, while individuals with lower status were engaged in agriculture and crafts which are more productive professions.

From the time of barbarism to the present day, warring, domination and expropriation are one of the criteria for gaining social status, and through the division of labour it is only legitimized, that is, socially acceptable explanation is found. In addition, those who are dominant in society have occupations that do not require much work and are well paid, while those that are dominated have occupations that require much work and are relatively poorly paid. The professions of those who dominate the society and exploit others are considered valuable and respected in that society. According to Veblen (1954: 3) such professions, since barbarism to this day, are those related to state administration, military affairs, religious affairs (as Veblen calls the defence of natural and supernatural powers) and sports.

In order to gain and maintain higher status within the social class to which they belong, individuals with lower social status mimic those with higher social status. Those with high social status try to retain it by consuming expensive branded goods and services that are believed to be of higher quality. In an attempt to achieve higher social status, individuals often seek to use expensive branded products and services that they can hardly afford, even though there are a multitude of lower priced products and services that are thought to be intended for individuals with lower social status. Thorstein Veblen, for example, in his concept of 'emulation', believed that individuals adopt 'patterns of life' as well as consumption because of the desire to dissociate themselves from the social strata to which they belong as inferior and to be perceived as individuals who are part of the superior social strata.

3. Weber's understanding of the relation between status and lifestyle

Unlike classes that are more statistical categories, statuses according to Weber have a greater realistic chance of forming communities. There is a clear distinction between social class and status, but in the general public as well as in professional circles often social class and social status are taken as synonyms for one another. So often when talking about class differences we mean status differences, when we talk about class barriers we mean status barriers, when we talk about class consciousness we mean status consciousness etc. (Chan, Goldtgorpe 2007: 515). Status is based on the expectation to show respect, either because of the particular qualities of individuals belonging to a particular status group or because of the class to which they belong (Gerth and Mills 1958: 186). In this sense, Chan, Goldtgorpe (2007: 513) point out those statuses are symbolic aspects of class structure that cannot be reduced to economic relations in a society alone.

Honour refers to the differentiation, respect and expectation that others have for a particular individual or group. It can be a formal process through: assigning and using titles that a particular person possesses in their communication. Mutual communication shows respect or disrespect for a particular individual through the way we greet, engage or disengage in formal or informal groups, the way we build our friendships. Respect is reflected in social relationships, in the way we establish interaction with others.

Respect is by nature social, a quality of social relations, not an automatic reflection of the position that a particular individual holds in the economic sphere. It is associated with many qualities that can be valued positively or negatively. People with the same social status can form communities with unwritten norms of behaviour. Unlike the class that relies on the mode of production, statuses are based on the level of respect that individuals have in society, and lifestyles are formed on the basis of consumption (Weber 1966: 27).

Because honour is associated with membership in a particular status group and status groups require a specific lifestyle from their members, one could say that the lifestyle becomes a descriptive manifestation of membership in the status group. It is therefore not surprising that influential status groups establish formal and informal monopolies on elements that make specific lifestyles. Sorel (1981: 7) holds that lifestyle in Max Weber's theory is not as important as a theoretical concept but as a means of distinguishing between class and status.

A status group can be formed on the basis of any social trait that is recognized by others and that is a subject of social respect. An example of such a characteristic may be ethnic or religious affiliation, male or female gender, etc. There are a multitude of status groups, but most importantly reflect the crystallization of social power and affect the life prospects of individuals. The bands that are based on different musical tastes are not really status groups in the Weberian sense of the word. They are important for the social respect of their members, but cannot represent the crystallization of social power and have a decisive influence on the life prospects of their members.

According to Weber, ownership is an important basis for forming a status group, especially in countries with a strong market economy. Those who have significant quantities of property or wealth have the necessary assumptions to form a distinctive lifestyle that others cannot follow. In addition to ownership, the basis for acquiring status may also be the manner and time in which it is acquired. In that sense, there may be a difference in status between those who possess a large amount of ownership and wealth over a long period of time and those who have acquired it recently.

Lifestyle is based on the difference in consumption that is characteristic of individual status groups. The consumption indicates the belonging to a certain status group. Max Weber analysed lifestyle as a distinctive element of status groups. Life style is closely linked to recognisability and prestige. Lifestyle is the most visible manifestation of social differences that exist even within the same social class. It is a reflection of the prestige that individuals believe they possess or aspire to (Sorel 1981: 8).

Status groups can cross class lines. This is especially true for ethnic groups, where honours are based on common ancestors, history, myths, etc. The honour given to people of a certain ethnicity can lead to better job opportunities for them, opportunities for advancement, privileges, etc. Therefore, statuses affect the life prospects of individuals.

According to Veal (2001), for Max Weber, individual status groups are associated with shaping and maintaining specific lifestyles. The lifestyle that is shaped by individual social statuses serves as a symbol of recognition and differentiation from other social status groups in society. So lifestyles can be based on membership in a particular religious group, a way of dressing, a way of eating, and so on. Status groups are associated with restrictions on interacting with those who do not belong to the same status group and at the same time encourage closer relationships between

people belonging to the same status community.

It could be said that status is the most important element in the stratification of feudal societies. From the French Revolution to the present day, status has steadily lost its place in the stratification of society. The cohesive power of status groups is weakened, and thus their chances of determining the behaviour and lifestyle of their members. For example, Chan, Goldtgorpe (2007: 515) note that there is reason to believe that in modern society status loses importance in determining the position of individuals in the stratification system. Namely, in the empirical research done by these aviators, they find that social status has a low correlation with education and income. They also find that the most statuses are among the middle class, i.e. employers in small business and self-employed. It could be said that this class is status heterogeneous. Much lower number of statuses exists for the upper and working class. Although in modern society social status has lost its significance once it is still relevant, it is still a relevant factor in social stratification, and especially in the determination of lifestyle.

4. Social Classes and Lifestyle (Pierre Bourdieu)

As Croosley (2008: 87) notes, Pierre Bourdieu is one of the few sociologists of his generation who has succeeded in his theory in maintaining the balance between the analysis of culture in general and, above all, of the lifestyle on the one hand, and the analysis of social classes by the other side. Bourdieu himself did not classify the social class and there are not many places where he explicitly writes about the social class. But his concept of habitat is the relation between social class, status and lifestyle (Ambrasat et.al. 2016: 3).

According to Pierre Bourdieu, lifestyles are mainly a reflection of social practices that are related to the tastes of individuals. As Stevenson (2006: 339) notes, Pierre Bourdieu in *Distinction* points out that society is based on social classes. According to Bourdieu, individuals in a society have an objective position in the social space, i.e. their portfolio of economic and cultural capital. The concept of cultural capital developed by Bourdieu distinguishes from the materialist, Marxist conception of the social class. According to Bourdieu, social power and dominance are related not only to the possession of material but also to the possession of cultural and social resources (Croosley 2008: 88).

The reason for the difference in the class theory of Marx and that of Bourdieu may be sought in the socio-historical context. Namely, Marx developed his theory

in the 19th century, observing the first phase of the development of industrial capitalism. At that moment two new social classes are being created and growing: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The two new classes are closely linked to means of production. Practically the attitude towards the means of production makes the difference, but also the conflict between these two social classes. Those differences that grow into conflict have dominated social life for a long time. Bourdieu developed his theory in the second half of the 20th century, when this dichotomous structure of society did not exist. There is a demarcation of management and ownership over the means of production, growth in public sector employment, the emergence of highly paid occupations. It was during this period that the expansion of education and the importance of qualifications and with it the importance of cultural capital emerged. Social stratification has become much more complex than it was in the 19th century. According to Bourdieu, each individual has a portfolio of equity that can be material and cultural. He even makes mathematical calculations on two axes of material capital (vertical axis) and cultural capital (horizontal axis) and thus mapping individuals in the stratification system. Mapping helps to locate individuals belonging to certain social classes (Croosley 2008: 88). But such classes, as Bourdieu observes, are only theoretical classes or classes on paper. Individuals who have a similar position in the social space do not necessarily have to identify with the class to which they belong and take collective action, as real social classes do. This part of Bourdieu's class analysis does not differ much from the March dichotomy of "class for itself" where members identify with the class and "class in itself" where individuals lack class consciousness (Croosley 2008: 88).

Although they usually don't form a true class, individuals with the same social standing live under similar living conditions. People who have a similar volume and capital structure are more likely to meet, develop interactions, and establish relationships than those who differ drastically on the issue. They can afford to provide the same type of housing, send children to the same schools, and develop the same habits and lifestyles. Habits are shaped by the interaction between individuals belonging to the same social network. Habitual differences between people belonging to different social categories, such as manual workers or white collars, begin at a time when they are distancing themselves from satisfying basic biological needs for food and accommodation. The lifestyle of the manual workers has a low degree of freedom and comes down to a functional adjustment to provide a livelihood. Those who have no problem with providing the subsistence minimum begin to develop different lifestyles.

Lifestyle as a concept is used to differentiate certain social groups from others, as well as to provide conditions for intragroup solidarity. Some lifestyles manage to

provide greater social legitimacy than others. In this sense, lifestyle is closely linked to the unequal distribution of symbolic resources and power in society. Lifestyle relies on certain cultural markers and taste-based distinction. However, cultural codes that serve to identify particular lifestyles are not fixed. They are subject to disputes and cultural changes (Stevenson2006: 339).

During socialization, individuals incorporate certain patterns of behaviour and ways of thinking that reflect their class background. The mind and body are thus shaped by the social context in which individuals live. Thus the material and immaterial conditions of life are incorporated into social practice. Hence lifestyle is a routine practice, that is, a routine incorporated in the habits of dressing, feeding, acting, etc. But also the habit has an inherent logic of practice, which is applied in different social situations. Hence, the habitus, on the one hand, is a reflection of the social experience that is characteristic of the social class (the position that the individual holds in society), and on the other hand it produces similar patterns of behaviour for individuals with the same social position (Ambarat et.al. 2016: 4).

5. Social Class, Individualization and Lifestyle (Ulrich Beck)

According to Ulrich Beck, we live in a society of risks, in the second modernity, i.e. in reflective reality. It is characterized by several things: 1. The decline of social classes, 2. The individualisation and reflexivity of personal identities, and 3. Global risks that go beyond the capabilities of nation-states for their control (Svarplys, Morkevicius 2013: 27).

According to Ulrich Beck, the social class is the most important social institution of modern society. In industrial society, the social system was clearly defined. The basis of society was the family. Families belonged to a certain class, low, high, middle. The division of labour within the family was gender-based. Men were building professional careers, and women were doing family work. Industrial society was based on a culture of class and sex differences. The nation-state established social order (Svarplys, Morkevicius 2013: 27). The rules of the game were clear and, if respected, they guaranteed the building of a successful standardized biography appropriate to the social characteristics of individuals (Woodman, Threadgold, Possamai - Inesedy 2015: 1121).

Such a hierarchically organized society, according to Ulrich Beck, no longer exists. Since the 1980s, political inequalities have disappeared from the political, academic, and discourse of everyday life. Although social differences still remain

significant, the living conditions of that period have improved significantly, according to Ulrich Beck, contributing to changing social structure. Namely, Ulrich Beck states that in contemporary society, social inequalities remain as large as before, but they are no longer associated with social class (Beck, Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 30). In contemporary society, the social class does not have the same meaning for social stratification as in the time of industrial society. Sub-cultural class identities have disappeared as a result of improved living standards. Individuals no longer identify with the class to which they belong. Class differences have lost their traditional support of individuals, and a process of individualization and diversification of lifestyles has emerged. Belonging to a particular social class has lost its meaning. When individuals have the opportunity to secure their income and standard of living, they become more individualistic, independently determining their identity and behaviour. According to Beck, individualization in this sense means that individuals have control over their own time, living space, money and body. In such circumstances, belonging to the social class is no longer a social necessity nor a requirement. Individualization eliminates class differences as a characteristic of social identity. Individualization means that individuals pay more attention to seeking personalized solutions for building their own resumes, for confronting structural contradictions, and less for sharing their experiences, for collective action and for seeking collective solutions to individual problems. The reason for this is that the institutional contradictions that confront one individual differ from those faced by another individual with whom they share the same social position, such as a class position. Namely, individualization occurs precisely because there are large internal differences in social categories such as classes (Woodman, Threadgold, Possamai - Inesedy 2015: 1122).

Individualization carries with it the risk for individuals to take responsibility for designing their own life project, whether it is successful or not. In the past, it was the responsibility of the social class and the nation state. This means that there are less standardized biographies, similar to all those who belong to a particular social class. On the contrary, we live in a time when individuals are expected to take responsibility for the creation of their own biography, in times of reflective biographies or do-it-yourself-biography. Individuals do not always have good options to choose from, and even having them does not mean that they will make the right choice. One wrong choice in one area of an individual's life can be the reflection of others. For example, wrong choice of profession can have serious consequences on competence, self-realization, etc. (Svarplys, Morkevicius 2013: 28; Beck, Beck-Gernsheim Elisabeth 2002: 3).

The question is whether individualization is a matter of egoism or hedonism. According to Ulrich Beck, it is a question of the social context that is imposed

on individuals within Western societies. Analyzing the work of Beck, Woodman, Threadgold, Possamai - Inesedy (2015: 1122) conclude that individualization is a process of institutional transfer of the competences and responsibilities of individuals. According to Beck, even welfare state is an agent of individualization. It is made more for individuals than for families. Welfare state works more against than in favour of family cohesion.

Namely, the welfare state, especially the Bismarck type of welfare state, assumes employment, which in turn drives competence and education. In both cases (education and employment / career), the welfare state requires individuals to be ready for mobility at all times. The labour market, on the other hand, frees individuals from their dependence on a stable relationship with the family, neighbourhood, a living area that can be changed along with the workplace. But individualization is not selection of individuals. In modern society, individuals are condemned to individualization. Individualization of individuals is not allowed, but imposed. Individuals in modern society are required to plan long-term, adapt to change, organize, improvise, set goals, recognize difficulties, accept defeats, and so on. Individuals need to show initiative, flexibility, tolerance of frustration, etc. (Beck, Beck-Gernsheim 2002: 3).

6. Lifestyle Policy (Anthony Giddens)

Giddens' entire career can be divided into three phases. In the first he made a critical review of sociological theory. In the second phase, Giddens explored the possibility that society provides for individuals to work on creating their own identities. The third phase of Giddens' career is explicitly political. In "Third Way" he conceptually attempted to redefine the social-democratic political project (Armstrong 2007: 2).

Influenced by Anthony Giddens and his *Modernity and Self Identity* (1991), sociology has a tendency to view life style as a reflective product that does not necessarily have to be related to social status alone. This understanding still links lifestyle to social legitimacy, but increasingly focuses on how we would like to live in the modern global world (Stevenson 339). According to Giddens, lifestyle is not a luxury that only the wealthier social classes can afford, but everyone makes their own choices, that is, they choose their own lifestyles, although different groups have different choices. In addition, those belonging to the upper classes have greater choice. Lifestyle is not just a fancy job or a certain type of consumption, but it is related to the behaviour, attitudes and beliefs of individuals.

It can be said that lifestyles are pre-made templates for narrative. Lifestyle can be related to metropolitan or rural way of life. Lifestyle can be built around work success, or fun clubbing, sports, etc. Choices about what to eat, what to wear, what to associate with, position individuals as a certain type of person and distinguish them from others. Life choices shape personal identity and connect individuals with those who are similar to them and who make similar life choices. Behaviour related to a particular life choice is an external manifestation of the narrative of self-identification. According to Giddens (1991: 81), the more post-traditional society is, the more the lifestyle encompasses the essence of self-identification.

Life styles are containers of identities. The behaviours of individuals who identify with a particular lifestyle, and go beyond the expected behaviour for it, are placed in an out-of-character behaviour group (Giddens 1991: 82). Individuals may have more than one lifestyle, i.e. in front of different audiences they may have different lifestyles. That is what Giddens calls “lifestyle sectors.” For example, individuals may have different lifestyles at work, at home and so on.

In the mid-1990s, Giddens wrote about the introduction of life-style policies that should be at the centre of political life. They should be based on neglected issues such as body, emotions, intimacy, identity and self-realization. In general, lifestyle politics refers to the politicization of everyday life. It involves ethically, morally and politically inspired decisions related to consumption, transportation est. (De Moor 2014: 4).

According to Giddens, the most important political issues are not so much about (equal) life chances of individuals, but about lifestyles. Lifestyle policy and lifestyle policy based on equality together make the “new egalitarianism” Giddens advocated. The new egalitarianism that Giddens writes about is the equalization of chances between generations and differs from the “old egalitarianism” that was preoccupied with removing class differences and achieving equality in the status of individuals. Giddens is aware that the end result of new egalitarianism may be an increase in inequalities. He writes that the possibility of some people becoming extremely wealthy should not be ruled out if it is based on the extraordinary talent they possess. The new egalitarianism relies on upgrading human capital through education. According to Giddens, what individuals need is security, self-respect and self-actualization, not just distributive equality (Armstrong 2007: 2).

Lifestyle policy is based on the assumption that global issues and lifestyles are interconnected. So, for example, environmental lifestyles policy is based on the premise that environmental degradation depends on adopting new lifestyles harmful

to it. Therefore, the environment is most polluted in parts of the world where modern lifestyles are most accepted (Giddens 1991: 221). Lifestyle policies treat similarly the issues of animal welfare, ethical way of production and so on.

De Moor (2014: 4) points out that lifestyle-based policy action is growing in many countries. Lifestyle policy growth is taking place amid shrinking the importance, role, and even sovereignty of nation states at the expense of supranational organizations, multinational corporations, etc. It seems that these new forms of power are less susceptible to the influence of citizens. Hence, the politics of lifestyles and the transformation of social movements are trying to fill that empty space.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of social stratification in sociological literature indicates a gradual shift in the focus of analysis from macro and meso-sociological topics such as class and status to micro-sociological themes such as lifestyle. So while at Veblen and Weber, the emphasis is on the class division of society, and status is analysed as a category that has an impact on the complexity of stratification of society, Bourdieu is already seeing a balance between different types of capital that produce habits and lifestyles to individuals. The emergence of cultural capital makes a big difference to the classic analysis of lifestyle. Namely, it is no longer associated only with the material but also the immaterial conditions of life of individuals, but also with their tastes. This means that in shaping individuals lifestyles, they have a degree of autonomy in their construction that corresponds to individuals preferences.

Understanding of lifestyle	Macro sociological concept	Medium volume concept	Micro sociological concept
Veblen	Social Class	Social Status	Lifestyle
Weber	Social Class	Social Status	Lifestyle
Bourdieu	Social Class	Possession of material and cultural capital	Habitus
Beck	/	/	Individualization
Giddens	/	/	Lifestyle politics

Veblen thinks that there are two basic classes in society, making him much closer to Marx than to Weber. Like Marx, Veblen thinks that the two basic classes are the exploiters and the exploited, that is what Veblen calls the free class and the workers. But here Veblen introduces an original and controversial idea. Namely, the status of exploiters of a particular social group is further nurtured and legitimized in the social division of labour, not vice versa as most leading sociologists believe. Status is therefore key to understanding both classes and lifestyles. Max Weber's statuses are narrower groups that exist within classes, but they can sometimes extend to different classes. Such statuses may be belonging to specific ethnic or religion groups.

Classes and statuses have different influences on lifestyles. Namely, the classes create the material assumptions for the creation and diversification of lifestyles. When social differences within a particular class become too large, they are reflected in separate lifestyles. Or, as Weber writes, classes are based on the attitude towards the means of production, while lifestyles are based on patterns of behaviour and, above all, consumer behaviour. Statuses as a certain level of prestige that separate groups in society more closely resemble communities, than classes that are more statistical categories. Hence, they create norms of behaviour for their members and in turn influence the creation of behaviour patterns in individual lifestyles. While one class can create multiple lifestyles, that is, to create favourable material conditions in which differences in the tastes of individuals are reflected in the creation of separate lifestyles, statuses are not as heterogeneous and do not produce a multitude of lifestyles.

Lifestyles i.e. consumption patterns depend on the degree of freedom that individuals achieve when they meet the subsistence minimum in a given period. That's why Veblen talks about a free and working class. The working class lives as it should, while the free class has the privilege of choosing the way it lives i.e. its lifestyle. With socio-economic development, the standard of living of the population has grown and an increasing number of the general population has been able to satisfy their existential needs and thereby gain the opportunity to freely choose their lifestyle. Of course, this does not mean that inequalities in society are disappearing, on the contrary, they are the same, and perhaps even greater than before, but in defining lifestyles a new criterion is now being introduced, namely the cultural capital and tastes of individuals. In the analysis of contemporary sociologists such as Bourdieu, Beck and Giddens, writing about life styles insists on individual, subjective tastes rather than on social structure and related statuses.

	Social class	Status	Lifestyle
Veblen	There are only two social classes	Social status is the basis of both social classes and lifestyles.	Lifestyle reflects social status. Those with lower social status imitate the lifestyle of those with higher status. Those with higher status, in an effort to distance themselves from lower status individuals, consume goods and services that are unattainable to those with lower status.
Weber	There are more social classes	Status groups are influenced by individuals with spine prestige in society. Classes are usually divided into multiple status groups.	The basis of lifestyle is the consumption pattern
Bourdieu	There are more social classes. In their defence, in addition to the material, it also includes cultural capital	Status loses its meaning, but the class is still relevant to life style analysis.	Unequal distribution of symbolic resources. Lifestyles are mainly a reflection of social practices that are related to the tastes of individuals.
Beck	He writes about the decline of the social class at the expense of the rise of lifestyles. Classes are no longer needed by anyone. They are a burden on individuals.		Individualization means that individuals have control over their own time, living space, money, and so on. Individualization eliminates class differences as a characteristic of social identity
Giddens	The issue of social classes has been marginalized completely		Life styles are the fruit of individuals' life choices. Life styles reflect the self-identification of individuals. Lifestyle policy

References

- Ambrasat Jens, Von Scheve Christian, Schauenburg Gesche, Conrad Marcus and Schroder Tobias (2016) *Unpacking the Habitus: Meaning Making Across Lifestyles*; Sociological Forum, DOI: 10.1111
- Armstrong Chris (2007) *Life-styles, Life-changes and Radical Politics: Giddens on the New Egalitarianism*; Imprints: Egalitarian Theory and Practice; Vol.9, No 3
- Beck Ulrich, Beck-Gernsheim Elisabeth (2002) *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and Its Social and Political Consequences*; London: Sage Publications
- Chan Wing Tak, Goldtgorpe H. John (2007) *Class and Status: The Conceptual Distinction and Its Empirical Relevance*; American Sociological Review, Vol. 72, August
- Crompton R. (1998) *Class and Stratification: an Introduction to Current Debates*, 2nd edition, Polity Press
- Crosley Nick (2008) "Social Class" in Pierre Bourdieu: *Key Concepts*, Granfell Michael (editor). Durham: Acumen
- De Moor Joost (2014) *Lifestyle Politics and the Concept of Political Participation*; Paper Presented at PARTIREP Workshop "Conceptualizing Political Participation", Mannheim, 25-26 September, 2014
- Gaiddens Anthony (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in Late Modern Age*; Stanford: Stanford University Press
- Fine Alan Gary (1994) *The Social Construction of Style: Thorstein Veblens The theory of Leisure Class as Contested Test*; The Sociological Quarterly, Vol.35, No.3
- Gerth Hans and Mills C. Wright (1958) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*; New York: Oxford University Press
- Granfell Michael, ed. (2008) *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*; Durham: Acumen
- Hannkin Janet (2000) "Lifestyles and Health" In *Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, 2nd Edition, Volume 3, Borgatta F. Edgar and Montgomery J.V. Rhonda, editors; Macmillan: New York
- Jensen Michael (2007) *Defining Lifestyle; Environmental Sciences* Vol.4, No.2, DOI 10.1018/15693430701472747
- Kotlet Philit (2000) *Marketing Management*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall
- Maton Karl (2008) "Habitus" in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, Granfell Michael (editor). Durham: Acumen
- Mechanic David (1978) *Medical Sociology*, New York: Free Press
- Sorel E. Michael (1981) *Lifestyle and Social Structure: Concepts, Definitions and Analyses*; New York: Academic Press

- Stevenson Nick (2006) "Lifestyle" In *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, Tucker S. Brian (editor), New York: Cambridge University Press
- Svarplys Andrius, Morkevicius Vaidas (2013) *Political Sociology*; Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University
- Veal A.J. (2001) *Leisure, Culture and Lifestyle*; Society and Leisure, Vol. 24, No 2
- Veblen Thorstein (1954) *The Theory of Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*; Introduction by Robert Lekachman; New York: Penguin Books
- Weber Max (1966) *Class, Status and Party* in "*Class, Status and Power*", Bendix R. and Lipset S.M. (editors), New York: The Free Press
- Woodman Dan, Threadgold Steven, Possamai – *InesedyAlphia* (2015) Prophet of New Modernity: Ulrich Becks Legacy for Sociology; *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 51, No.4