

# CHAPTER 1 21st Century Leisure

**W**hat is leisure? There are many approaches to defining leisure, as will be outlined in Chapter 2. Many languages, such as German, Spanish, and Japanese, have no equivalent term. Most languages have some concept of "free time." Many have a word that connotes laziness or doing nothing. In North America we don't use the word a lot. When we do, we usually mean something like this: "Leisure is what we do for fun." A slightly more sophisticated version would be that leisure is activity we do primarily for the experience. And that may be enough, at least for a beginning.

After all, we are also not that precise about most other terms that are basic to human life. What is work? It is more than the employment for which we are paid. Work includes such unpaid activities as caring for and nurturing children, providing for the maintenance of a household, preparing ourselves for economic roles through study, and all sorts of activities that support life and community. What is love? We mean so much and so many things by the term that a clear definition would seem impossible. Perhaps nothing important in life can be defined much better than "Leisure is activity that is done primarily for the experience itself."

## **The Variety of Leisure**

One thing that is clear about leisure is that it is incredibly varied.

*What* is done as leisure? Leisure may be a challenging and exciting game of skill, such as basketball. It may also be dreamlike contemplation alone alongside a stream. It may be intense physical exertion or relaxed daydreaming. It may involve significant interaction with the people most important to us or it may be solitary. It may be carefully organized or quite spontaneous. It may be almost anything.

Studies in several North American and European communities have found most people listing such ordinary activities as informal conversation in person and on the telephone, watching television, walking and talking with friends and family, playing with children, intimate affection, shopping, and reading. It includes less common activities, such as sports and hobbies, gardening, electronic communications and games, entertaining, eating out, watching videos and movies, and other outdoor activities. But that is only the beginning. For leisure, relatively small numbers of people climb cliffs, train horses, soar and fly light planes, engage in martial arts and yoga, find and polish rocks, collect tea cups

and guns, and even round up rattlesnakes. They gamble, drink, do drugs, and buy sex. In fact, there is almost nothing that may not be leisure for someone living down the street or across town.

*When* is leisure? There are the designated times-vacations and weekends for those with traditional work schedules. Yet there are also the moments found in the midst of daily life. There is the joking conversation in the hall on the way to class. There is the moment of lightness in the midst of serious planning and even in math class. We are not on task all the time. The mind wanders far from the work task. The coffeemaker provides an excuse for meeting, kidding, and even flirting in the office. In fact, it may be that some playful behavior, even silliness, is needed to get us through the day. Some would even argue that breaks add to productivity. Some leisure is set apart and scheduled, but some just happens.

*Where* is leisure? Again, almost anywhere. The gym may be deadly serious and the office full of play. Even factory workers have been found to play with their machines. Perhaps most leisure takes place at home, especially with TV and electronic entertainment centers. Some occurs in special places, even destinations such as Disney World and Las Vegas. Some takes place in special environments of forest, mountain, and shore. More occurs in the ordinary places where we spend most of our lives.

## The Variety of People

Activity, time, and place are only the beginning of the variety. There is also a variety of people.

*Economic status* makes a difference. The wealthy travel farther and more often, flying to Aspen for a weekend of skiing (and shopping) and to London for a pair of plays. They purchase privacy in exclusive country clubs, high-price restaurants, and upscale resorts. They value time more than money and may even equate quality with price. The poor, on the other hand, just trying to get through the day and the week, do what is cheap and available. And between the wealthy and the poor are the middle mass, watching television, eating fast food, and planning a once-a-year trip on a budget. The contrasts are clear.

*Cultures* differ as well. There is the high culture of the educated, the pop culture of the masses, and the special cultures of youth. There are the cultural traditions of ethnic identity. The cultural traditions brought by immigrants may persist for generations. Food, entertainment, family roles, religions, and practices vary. In one California town, there are fourth-generation Anglos, first-generation Latinos, eighth-generation Mexican Americans, first-generation Cambodians, and fourth-generation Japanese Americans. They have different games, customs, symbols, resources, and traditions.

*Gender* remains significant. This culture still has rather different expectations for women and men, as it does for little girls and boys. Even when the same activities are encouraged, gender differentiates styles of behavior. As will be discussed in Chapter 13, women may even be defined as ornaments for the leisure of men, as demonstrated in almost every televised athletic contest.

*Skill* differentiates other activities. Most adults experience sport only as entertainment. A minority focus on the development and exercise of skill. Some find excitement and involvement in doing activities while others are entertained by what others are doing. There is even Las Vegas "sport," which promises excitement without skill.

People are unique in their leisure as well as in the rest of life. Some are relatively conventional and even predictable. Others combine themes and activities in unique ways. The point, however, is clear. Leisure is varied in terms of the human actors who develop their leisure and their conditions, as well as in the things they do.

## The Scope of Leisure

On first glance, leisure may seem relatively unimportant and secondary in comparison to work, family, or even education. There seems to be a cultural bias against the significance of play. Without going into detail, a few counterarguments may alter the perspective. First, as already introduced, leisure is much more than a few set-apart activities done in leftover time.

Second, there is the economic scope of leisure. As will be detailed in Chapters 11 and 23, leisure is a major and growing segment of modern economies. Wander through your local discount store and count how many products are leisure-based. Electronics, sports equipment and apparel, toys, shoes and shirts, and even leisure chairs are only the beginning. Wall Street firms and Sunday newspapers have leisure departments and sections. Tourism is growing rapidly. Estimates vary by what is included, but \$300 billion a year is a conservative estimate of the leisure segment of the American economy.

Third, there are the resources designated for leisure and recreation. The federal government alone manages at least 400 million acres of land for recreation and combined uses. Local governments preserve and develop extremely valuable land for parks and recreation. States hold scarce lake, river, and sea shores. The market sector now far exceeds public programs in building and operating indoor facilities for sport, cultural, and fitness activity.

Fourth, there is time. The old designation of the labor movement was eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, and eight hours "for what we will:" That may be oversimplified, but it suggests the potential scope of time that may be allocated to leisure. Nor does this include days without employment, often weekends, vacations of two weeks to over a month, and the lengthening years of retirement.

Fifth, there is the personal significance of leisure. This theme will be developed throughout the book. At this point, let it suffice to suggest that teens tend to center their lives and much that is most important to them on their leisure; many adults work primarily for the income that supports the rest of life; and much of the development of our most important relationships takes place in leisure. Many people define themselves more by their leisure than their work as they seem to identify with their summer softball team, fishing skill, church office, or motorcycle.

What seems clear is that leisure is a major part of life on every level. It is significant to the day-to-day living of young and old, to families and friendships, to the economy, and

even to the expression and preservation of cultures. And that is just a beginning in exploring leisure in our lives.

## The First Issue: Social Change

One aim of this book is to look not only at the past and the present, but also to the future. We live in a society that is changing in almost every way. Amidst this change, leisure has undergone considerable transformation and will change more in the future. Leisure, like life, in the 21st century will not escape the impacts of social change. First, then, we need to summarize some central elements of that change. What is clear in the beginning, however, is that the world in which today's students live out their life journeys will not be the same as those of their parents.

### Longer-Term Social Change

**1. Urbanization:** In the 1800s, the United States was beginning to change from a rural and agricultural society to an industrial and urban society. The Civil War was won by the industrial power of the North. The factory brought together a work force with raw materials where the rivers, seaports, and railroads met. Since World War II, the "metropolitan sprawl" has spread out along the rails and highways to form linked towns and incremental suburban development. Not only manufacturing, but also finance, culture, and recreation, are found in the megapolis. Now there is a decentering of the city into the malls and strips of retailing and entertainment that are dependent on private transportation.

**2. World Economic Integration:** A visit to any discounter demonstrates the global nature of economic activity. Ordinary goods are manufactured almost anywhere in the world, especially where labor costs are low. What is an "American" car, when parts are shipped from Europe and the Pacific Rim to be assembled in Mexico or Canada? Almost all major corporations are global in finance as well as production and distribution. American movies dominate the theaters of every country with the international market counted on for cost recovery and profits. Even agriculture depends on markets in Europe, Asia, and Africa. In turn, the supermarket produce department features fresh fruit and vegetables from the Southern Hemisphere in the dead of winter. And Midwest factories close when labor-intensive manufacturing is moved to Latin or Asian countries.

**3. Racial Identification:** In the United States, the long-taken-for-granted forces of segregation and discrimination began to be shattered in the 1960s. Civil rights, however, have been only the beginning of change that has penetrated every institution of the society. People of color insist on defining their own identities and lives. Ethnic and racial diversity also means a self-identification with accompanying assertion of rights of recognition, opportunity, and justice in every aspect of life. This long-term process is coupled with a world perspective that recognizes the numerical minority status of those who are "white" despite their disproportionate control of power and resources.

**4. Gender:** The women's movement in North America and Europe goes back well into the 19th century. The limitations placed on women's political and economic participation have fallen at an increasing rate although real and subtle barriers persist. The focus on women with an insistence on a full set of opportunities for social and personal development is now central to changes in every social institution.

**5. Geographical Expansion:** A century ago, most people never left their communities or regions except in time of war or in response to opening frontiers. Now the jet airplane, interstate highways combined with comfortable and reliable cars, and the development of a massive travel industry have widened the horizons of those of middle and higher incomes. At the same time, the media, especially television, have brought an awareness of the larger world into every home. Globalization is more than an economic development; it is also cultural and social.

**6. Sexual "Revolution":** Beginning in the 1890s, sexual customs and behaviors began to change drastically. Aided by contraceptive technologies, the norms of sexual behavior have changed on every level of modern society. Today's parental generation accepts behavior in its children that would have been a social disgrace only a few decades ago. No social change has been as pervasive as the general acceptance of sexuality in a variety of forms and practices.

**7. Family:** Family size has decreased so that now most parents have fewer children in a shorter period of time. One consequence is that more of adult life is "nonparental" in the sense of having no children living with their parents. With most mothers of preschool and school-age children now in the paid work force, entire new patterns of childrearing are being attempted. Divorce rates seem to have leveled off at about 50 percent, but most children will experience some such disruption in parenting.

**8. Education:** Rates of high school and college completion have been rising for decades. The result is that the required educational credentials for entry into most occupations have escalated. At the same time, the cultural background of each generation tends to be greater than the one before.

All these and other changes have been under way for long periods, some since World War II and others for over two centuries. Some are so gradual that they pass almost unnoticed. Yet, they affect every life in their continued impacts on the social and economic contexts in which we work out our lives. At the same time, there are a number of more current changes that will make a difference in how we live in the next century. Among them are the following.

## **Current Social Change**

**1. The "Post-Industrial" Economy:** Any economy has to produce some goods and services that command markets somewhere in the world economy. No economy is postindustrial in no longer needing to produce steel, plastics, chemicals, medicines, and even cars and airplanes. Nevertheless, almost all of the increase in jobs in the last two

decades has been in the "service" sector. Retailing, human services, health care, hospitality, entertainment, and even recreation have produced almost all of the new jobs in North America. There have been shifts in production, new products, and many small businesses that are product-oriented. But more and more employment has come to mean direct or indirect service of some clientele. It may be in hotels or nursing homes, in the mega-mall or the resort boutique, but the service economy is growing. Among the implications are the large number of entry-level, direct service jobs, seven-day-a-week and twenty-four-hour-day varied work schedules, and the increase in jobs designated for women.

**2. Communications:** As late as the 1950s, households in some rural areas were just being connected with telephones. Now the telephone connects households with electronic communications in a worldwide network. The "information age" is rapidly making communications faster, cheaper, wider, and more pervasive. Hookups to fiber optic cable systems that transmit and receive are being challenged by satellite dishes and other wireless networks. There may be an information overload and a proliferation of choices, but the rate of change seems to be escalating—from radio and telephone to television and video and now cable, computer, fiber optics, and the satellite. The scope and immediacy of communications may be on the edge of even more dramatic change.

**3. Capitalism:** The global economy is no longer divided between market and planned economies. The market system, often in partially regulated forms, has encompassed the world economy. There are central and peripheral national economies, concentrations of power and investment capital, and great inequalities of resources and opportunities both within and among nations. Nevertheless, despite concerns about the problems of moving overnight from a planned to a market system, there is no alternative to participation in global capitalism with its costs and benefits. There remain problems of great disparities in resources of all kinds, in distribution of income and opportunities, and in conditions for work. There is a clear dominance of a few nations with most of the investment capital and technological competence. Nevertheless, despite some pockets of backlash and many distortions, the market system has become dominant with no viable alternatives in sight.

**4. Conflict:** Despite such global communications and increasing integration, conflicts remain on many levels. Some are localized in particular cities and regions, as between inner cities and suburbs. Some are racial, ethnic, or even religious. Some have long histories, and some are current and contemporary. Nevertheless, the end of the "cold war" did not end conflict. In fact, increasing political freedom and communication links can lead to a renewed awareness of differing interests and conflicts that were held in check by now defunct authorities. Some recognition of such conflict may lead to greater freedom and autonomy in the long run for formerly oppressed people. In the short term, however, such conflict is destructive for both individuals and their communities.

**Leisure:** Amid such change, leisure is changing as well. The issue is whether such change is gradual and evolutionary or dramatic and fundamental. Looking back, it is clear that the automobile and television radically changed leisure patterns. It may be

less clear that such technological impacts are now under way. Nor are the impacts of societal changes on leisure as clear, especially if leisure is largely a private matter. That is the issue for debate in the remainder of this chapter. The format will summarize arguments on both sides of the question for use and consideration as suggested in the Preface to the book.

## **Debate: 21st Century Leisure Will Be New and Different**

### *Yes*

A number of arguments support the idea that leisure will be quite different in the future rather than largely "more of the same:" Of course, the question is embedded in a larger question of social change. Leisure reflects its social and economic contexts. How will the 21st century be really different from the twentieth? Will the changes of the past hundred years be only the prelude for even more rapid and drastic change in the future?

- **New Technologies:** The geography of leisure was radically changed by the automobile and, to a lesser extent, by the jet airplane. Time use, especially in the home, was transformed by television (see Chapter 16). Is it likely that new electronic developments will bring about the same kind of change in leisure? As home computers become more common and the software for communications, information, and games proliferates, will leisure styles become more focused on communications? Those now in school will take the computer for granted. Also, in-home electronic entertainment centers will offer an incredible range of entertainment through fiber optic and satellite technologies. Large screen, surround sound, digital high-resolution pictures, interactive systems with on-demand sports, movies and other programs on a fee basis, and increasingly diverse offerings on the worldwide web make the home an all-purpose work, play, and education center. Will such technologies only increase the programmatic offerings to be fit into current lifestyles, or will they transform current patterns? And what of other technologies related to travel, communications, and new forms of games and entertainment? Will ordinary TV and videos look as quaint as band concerts and the Model T in a decade or two?

- **Market Expansion:** Chapter 23 will suggest how the market sector of the economy is expanding more into leisure. New technological developments expand markets for products, services, and activities themselves. Examine the telephone "Yellow Pages" for examples of leisure-based businesses that did not exist a decade ago. Will the expansion increase? And does supply create demand? There is little doubt that there are more local leisure-based businesses. At the same time, more destinations are developed that promote themselves as centers of fun. Orlando and Las Vegas compete with domestic and international destinations. On television soap operas or sitcoms, life is centered around glamorous travel, eating out at expensive restaurants, and going to a variety of shows. The images of the "good life" are those of leisure that is cost-intensive and that promises an enhanced social and sexual status for those willing and able to be extravagant leisure consumers.

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- **Consumption Values:** Note that more of the advertising features glamour, excitement, and pleasure. Is there a new "leisure ethic" emerging that no longer requires that leisure be positive and productive? Is consumption presumed to be pleasure enough of a rationale for leisure spending? With gambling legalized in most states, sexually explicit entertainment found in most communities, and leisure symbols displayed everywhere, leisure consumption patterns seem to signal a new acceptance of leisure as self-justifying and of mass entertainment as leisure. Leisure is at least an OK reward for less-than-stimulating work. Leisure consumption seems more central to value systems as measured by how so many spend their money and their time.

- **Individual and Developmental Values:** Along with consumption values, leisure seems less tied to other people. Leisure is identified with the self. More than just pleasure, leisure is the primary social space for the development of the self. Both the body and the spirit become foci of leisure investments. In the past, for example, women were expected to make their leisure, if any, revolve around their family roles. They often were encouraged to feel guilty if they devoted time or money to anything that was just for themselves. Now the reverse is true. Women are encouraged to have time, space, and activities of their own. There is a general cultural acceptance of orientations toward the self: self-expression, self-development, and even self-absorption. The self is "in" in leisure for both men and women.

- **A "Leisure Society":** As we will see, predictions of vastly increased time for leisure have not proven accurate. In a more profound way, however, society may become more leisure centered rather than work centered. One aspect is the decline of work. As will be discussed in Chapter 11, work careers are becoming more variable and uncertain, work timetables more diverse and changing in the service sector, and even work commitments weakened by continual layoffs and "downsizing." What will take the place of work as a central commitment? At least for some, may leisure not be the reward for work? The signs are everywhere. People wear leisure togs around town rather than work outfits. They make friends in recreation more than at work. They organize their children's after-school and summer lives around recreation programs. They use their credit cards to take trips they can't afford and buy toys that symbolize a life that is more than survival. If work becomes more instrumental and inconsistent, will leisure become the center of who we are, of our social identities? If so, this would be a change more profound than can be produced by any technology.

*No*

The argument against radical change in leisure takes quite a different perspective. It begins by suggesting that the previous "pro" points operate on the periphery of real leisure as people live it day to day. After all, fewer than 5 percent of American adults go to Las Vegas even yearly, most never can afford much international travel, and a lot of the new leisure toys are soon stuffed in the back of closets. People don't change just because there is all that stuff out there. Further, there is the cost factor. Many of the new technologies are prohibitively expensive for most people. Old-fashioned TV sets have gone down in price, but the leading-edge technologies are always sold at a premium.

- **The Household Base of Leisure:** Most of the consumer leisure items are designed to get people out of the house and into more expensive locales and activities. The truth, however, is that measured by time, most leisure takes place in and around the home. That seems unlikely to change. Teens want to get out of the home, but things change when they inaugurate their own residences. They have protection and privacy. Further, presumably they are living with others whom they have chosen as companions. A lot of leisure is just interacting with those co-residents, whether there is a committed relationship or not. At some times, the residence offers privacy and an opportunity for rest and relaxation. All the glitz and glamour out there may not be attractive as an everyday opportunity. And the home is inexpensive with almost-free television, conversation, reading, and just goofing off. For those rearing children, the home and family are the center of leisure. That seems unlikely to change just because of marketed goods and services.

- **The Leisure "Core":** What do people really do in the ordinary days of their lives? Research has demonstrated that there is a core of activities that is central to day-to-day living through most of life. That core includes informal interaction and conversation with co-residents, watching television, often some reading for pleasure, and other home-based activities. Parents play with their children. Many walk and garden. Outside the home, most do some shopping as leisure. They garden and fix up the house and even do some special cooking. These are the informal, accessible, low-cost kinds of activities that children, teens, adults, and the aging continue most of their lives. Teens hang out with their friends and take radios everywhere. There are no indications that this core is changing to any measurable extent. New technologies such as videos and high-resolution TV may increase variety and enhance opportunities, but the basic patterns do not change much. Special events are more market responsive. The core is really what most people do most of the time that they are not on the job, commuting, sleeping, or engaged in maintenance activities. Pretty much everyone wants some undemanding and easy engagement. Most engage in some communication and even affection with family and friends. New technologies and market offerings don't affect this core much.

- **Television, etc.:** As will be outlined in Chapter 16, there are variations in the amount of time devoted to watching television. And there are some who resist the tube almost entirely. Most, however, watch TV more than two hours a day and more on weekends. It may be a residual activity of low investment and intensity. But it is there, paid for, and generally somewhat entertaining. Videos have increased the choices available and given some control over the medium. Other technologies will yield variety, higher quality, more selection, and other changes in the technology. But the patterns of easy access and popular entertainment are unlikely to change people's habits to any great extent. There are fads in programming. There will be promotion of new goods and services. But most will come back to what is easy and available.

- **Nonchange:** As outlined previously, there are many social and economic changes of significance going on now. There will be more. Nonetheless, there are many things that are not changing much. Our society still has the wealthy, the poor, and the middle mass. The economy still requires employment in order to have more than survival economic

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resources. School is still required of children. Most adults marry and have children, even if the percentage is down 10 percent or so. Mass entertainment still captures more time than the novel and different. Markets for everything are still segmented according to income. Aging still leads toward death. We are still gendered beings in all we do despite new opportunities and roles for women. We are still the thinking and self-conscious beings who are also animals who eat, drink, move, and have sex. Leisure is still a part of all these dimensions of life that are relatively stable. Just adding some new and fancy frills will not change the basics of human existence.

• **The "Work Society":** Leisure may be changing in many of its marketed technologies and programs. Those with discretionary incomes may be spending a marginally higher proportion of their household income on leisure (see Chapter 11). But any economy that does not produce the goods and services required to maintain the society is condemned to decline and failure. The social timetable is still structured around factory and office schedules. Financial resources for living, including leisure, still depend on being paid for employment as well as for investment. Every study of employed women and men demonstrates some time scarcities and pressures related to work. We still tend to identify ourselves in terms of our economic roles. Our personal schedules give priority to work requirements. We may value our jobs primarily instrumentally and look forward to retirement, but we don't want to be laid off or fired. And even leisure is often supported in terms of its contribution to productivity, health, and other work factors. Work may be changing as it becomes less stable, secure, and predictable. But it is still central to our lives. Leisure gives way to work more often than work to leisure. Perhaps that will change some day, but it hasn't yet.

How can this debate be resolved? It is probably more important to engage in the examination of our lives than to reach a final verdict. Both stability and change are real. To some extent it is a matter of focus. What do we include in our argument and how do we rate the relative importance of different elements? At least it should be clear that looking into the future is not as simple as we might have thought at first.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there anything that can never be leisure? That is always leisure?
2. What are examples of the impacts of the world economy on everyday life?
3. How is popular culture global in scope? Give examples.
4. What is the most important new leisure technology?
5. Identify new leisure-based businesses. Are they successful?
6. Looking ahead to your lives in ten years, what will be more important, work or leisure? Why?
7. Measured by time, where is most of your leisure located?

## RESOURCES

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# CHAPTER 2 Leisure, Play, and Recreation

In the first chapter, leisure was defined generally as activity chosen primarily for the experience. It is assumed that some satisfaction, even "fun," is anticipated. That is adequate as a beginning, but there is much more. The concept of leisure, after all, has a long history. It was important to the classic Greek philosophers and has commanded considerable attention ever since. As a consequence, there have been a variety of conceptual approaches that often appear to be in conflict.

## Defining Leisure

Definitions are always partly a matter of perspective. That perspective may be based on certain philosophical presuppositions, cultural biases, or personal preferences. Some definitions are useful for particular purposes. Leisure, never a very specific concept, has been defined in a number of ways.

## Leisure as Time

Leisure is approached as time beyond that required for subsistence, maintenance, rest, and other necessities of living. When international research has employed daily diaries of time use,<sup>1</sup> it was assumed that labeling activities permitted them to be designated as work, maintenance, or leisure. However, walking could be for many purposes, cooking for pleasure, and reading required for work preparation. The term "discretionary" was then included in many definitions.<sup>2</sup> Leisure was seen as "free time" that was more than residual or left over; it was a matter of choice. The problem with this was obvious: How do you know? Does the seemingly simple measure of time require knowing what is going on in the mind of the actor? This complication led to other approaches. The concept of free time, however, remains important because it allows for simple comparisons. Teens have more free time than do young adults, single men than married, the retired than those in mid-career, and employed single mothers least of all. The leisure as remaining time approach is limited by the fact that all obligations are seldom completed. The leisure as discretionary time model is limited by the problem of constraints that must be overcome to engage in most leisure. Nevertheless, for comparison purposes the concept remains useful.

## Leisure as Activity

Leisure is commonly assumed to be defined by the form of the activity. This, too, is useful for such purposes as survey research. Checklists of activities-going to concerts, playing basketball, watching TV, etc.-are combined with some measure of frequency to obtain a profile of a person's leisure. Like time, the results can be quantified and compared: Males engage in more team sports than do females. Women are more involved in the arts than are men. The problems are also similar. Is a pickup basketball game leisure after school but not in a required physical education class? Is swimming leisure at the beach but not when a health assignment after a heart attack? Is a cocktail party leisure on weekends but not at a sales conference? Is shopping leisure sometimes but not when filling the weekly grocery list? It is true that leisure is usually doing something that has a recognized form. Further, some forms are leisure more often than not. But there is nothing, except perhaps daydreaming, that is always leisure. The activity approach, like time, is useful, but is not an adequate definition. Meaning is more important than the form. Joffre Dumazedier proposed an activity definition based on meaning:

Leisure is activity-apart from the obligations of work, family, and society-to which the individual turns at will, for either relaxation, diversion, or broadening his (sic) knowledge and his spontaneous social participation, the free exercise of his creative capacity.<sup>3</sup>

Such a definition, however, includes the social context and the meaning to the actor, a far cry from just listing the name of the activity. Such definitions have led to attention to meaning as well as form.

## Leisure as a State of Mind

The most extreme response was to assert that the form of the activity is irrelevant; only the meaning counts. Leisure is defined by attitude or the state of consciousness, not form, time, or place. Leisure is defined by meaning to the actor. In the classic book *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*, deGrazia refers to leisure as a rare condition, a "state of being, a condition of man (sic), which few desire and fewer achieve."<sup>4</sup> This is more than feeling good. It is a condition that connotes freedom and self-fulfillment. Psychologists tend to take a more attitudinal approach. Leisure is activity in which the actor perceives freedom, intrinsic motivation, and non-instrumentality.<sup>5</sup> An activity is leisure when the actor feels it has been chosen primarily for its own sake, for the experience itself. From this experiential perspective, then, leisure is located in the consciousness of the individual, not in the social context or form of the activity. It can occur at any place and at any time. Anything that produces this feeling, the use of drugs for example, may be leisure regardless of longer-term meanings or outcomes.

## Leisure as a Quality of Action

This approach begins by asserting that leisure is more than a state of mind; it is doing something. That something may be mental and imaginative as well as physical. It may be

solitary or socially involved. But it involves doing something in a real time and place. It may focus on the experience, but is in a context that includes the self taking action in a defined environment. It is not just feeling free; it involves real choice, even in the midst of all kinds of limits and constraints. It is the quality of the activity; its "playfulness," that makes it leisure. It may take place anywhere and at any time, but it has a quality of self-contained meaning. It is related to work, family, education, the economy, government, religion, personal development, sexuality, and almost everything else. Yet it has distinguishing dimensions of action with its primary meaning in the experience.

## **Leisure as a Dimension of Life**

It would seem evident at this point that it is difficult, if not impossible, to draw clear and consistent boundaries around anything people do and call it leisure. It is experience, but in context. It has form, but is not defined by the form. It takes place in time, but defines the time rather than being defined by it. One possibility is that leisure is not a clearly defined domain of activity or consciousness at all. Rather, it is a dimension of life. It is an adjective more than a noun, a quality more than a thing. Some research has found just this: A dimension of being done primarily for the experience in the midst of all kinds of activity including family responsibilities and work.<sup>6</sup> Leisure is the expressive dimension of life that may occur or be constructed in any context.

## **Themes of Leisure**

It would seem evident that there may be no one "best" definition of leisure. Rather each has some values and some limitations. It is usually best, then, to refer to "leisure time," "the experience of leisure," "activity," or even "play" as a quality of action. There are, however, certain themes that are persistent. The first is as old as Aristotle who referred in Book I of the *Politics* to "time *free* from the necessities of work." Some understanding of freedom runs through most definitional approaches. This does not, however, mean freedom from all limits, regularities, and constraints. Leisure is *in* contexts that are integral parts of its meaning. It is freedom *to* act, not freedom *from* form and context.

The other persistent theme of defining leisure is its focus on the meaning or quality of the experience. Leisure has a "playful" quality in that its meaning is primarily in the experience. The general agreement begins to break down, however, when those qualities are to be identified. What does it mean to be "free" in a scheduled sports contest with boundaries, rules, officials, priced tickets, and performance expectations? What does "play" mean for the mother at a picnic for which she has spent hours in preparation and has to watch out for the safety of four children? What does it mean to be "intrinsically motivated" when we are practicing skills for a later event or performance? The focus may be on the experience, but leisure experiences are more complex in their meanings than any simple slogan can encompass.

What is clear is that leisure may be almost anything at any time and any place. This means that leisure is not always positive and constructive. There is a negative side to anything, including leisure. Leisure may be wasteful, destructive, and dangerous. It is gam-

bling as well as religious contemplation. It may involve the sexual use of other persons as well as a fully committed and caring communion. It may be cruel as well as compassionate. And as already proposed, it may take place at the workplace as well as the playing field, and in family time as well as vacation time. As such it may well be time, activity, experience, a quality of action, or a dimension of life. Or it may be all, and more.

## **Defining Play**

"Play" is usually used to refer to the activity of children. Children play and adults have leisure. Of course, we know that animals play as well. Historically and philosophically, however, the term "play" is far more encompassing. Yet, we do speak of being "playful" as a quality of our activity. Play connotes spontaneity, openness, action, and intrinsic satisfaction. Play is said to be developmental for children for whom play is their central activity, the primary context of learning. But it seems to drop out adult reference.

Like leisure, play may be seen as a quality of action. Johan Huizinga developed a perspective that argues that play is a fundamental human activity. He stresses the enjoyment of play as well as its intrinsic motivation. He adds that play is "out of the ordinary,"<sup>7</sup> a sphere of action that creates a temporary reality. It may have order and beauty, but is not for any preset external purpose. Just because of its openness, play is fundamental for creativity. It is in play that the innovative ideas are produced that become the basis of social, cultural, and even economic development. In its own created order, play is the context for exploration of the "not yet." This is true for the person as well as for the society.

Play may be spontaneous or structured. It may incorporate both freedom and order. In fact, it is in a context of order that we are most likely to experience what Csikszentmihalyi calls "flow."<sup>8</sup> Flow is a heightened state of consciousness in which there is total involvement and immersion in the current activity. When skill and the challenge meet, externals disappear in the highly satisfying experience. Flow may take place anywhere and is the quality that draws us back to challenging and creative activity. Other thinkers have identified play as the context of all sorts of deeply satisfying, personally developmental, and socially significant action.

One approach would be that play is the quality of action in creative, fulfilling leisure. Another would be that any activity, creative or destructive, that is open in its outcomes and focused on the immediate experience would be called "play." In any case, play is not confined to childhood. Rather, play is activity with a childlike "lightness" of style, is expressive primarily for its own sake, and creates its own world of meaning. We may be playful at work, with others, in rule-bound games or projects, and for brief moments as well as longer events. Play, then, becomes a quality of action or even a dimension of life. It is fundamental to our species' nature.

## **Defining Recreation**

Recreation may be defined in much the same way as leisure, inclusive and multifaceted. Its Latin root, *recreatio*, refers to restoration. Re-creation connotes a preparation for

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something else, usually work, family tasks, or civic responsibilities. Recreation, then, becomes a social issue. It is organized for social purposes, a means to the economic end of productivity, the personal goal of health, the social aim of building relationships, or some kind of growth or learning. As such, recreation may be required activity in a school program or sponsored by a corporation concerned about the physical and mental health of its employees.

Recreation, then, is organized activity with the purposes of the restoration of the wholeness of mind, body, and spirit. It presupposes some other activity that tires, depletes, or deteriorates that wholeness. *Leisure* has the language roots signifying freedom and *recreation* connotes restoration. As such, recreation becomes a social institution. It is intended to benefit the society through the health/wholeness of its citizens. It may be rest from demanding work or preparation for those demands. It may be mental, physical, or spiritual. It may be routinized or unique. It may be highly organized, even a drill, or relaxed and unstructured. But it has external purpose, measurable or immeasurable benefits. Recreation is defined as "voluntary non-work activity that is organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits including restoration and social cohesion."<sup>9</sup>

### **Mini-Debate: Leisure Is a Human Universal**

Is there any society and culture without leisure? It may depend on how leisure is defined. If leisure is clearly set-apart and demarcated time, then there have been relatively simple societies without such organization and social boundaries. In some societies, leisure is woven throughout the day in ways that do not draw clear lines between work and leisure. If leisure is defined as a quality of action or even a dimension of life, then it seems unlikely that it would be absent from any human life or culture.

#### **Yes**

- Leisure is really another way of referring to a fundamental quality of human, and even animal, existence. To be human is to play. Leisure is inclusively viewed as this quality of action or life. As such, it is impossible to conceive of life without it.
- Leisure and play are such basic dimensions of life that they are found throughout the life course. Infants play simple response games before they speak or walk. Children play in more complex ways and learn how to be social actors in the process. There is no age that abandons leisure as irrelevant or unimportant. From an individual perspective, play/leisure are deeply expressive of our natures.
- From a social perspective, leisure is universal in its bonding function. It is in leisure that we develop, strengthen, and extend many of our most important relationships. What is a friendship or a family without leisure/play as the context of exploring new facets of relationships and expressing enduring ones?
- We are not automatons or robots. Rather, it is human to be expressive and free. We concentrate on the experience of an action so that we may be truly ourselves. We cannot go through life always taking orders, obeying rules, and conforming to every little social expectation. We need to be able to be novel, different, ourselves. We need to immerse ourselves in what we do, even experience flow, to be more than totally scripted beings.

- Any culture has to be open to what is new, creative, and different. In work, there are predetermined outcomes. In leisure, we can attempt the different and see what results. We may play anywhere designing at the computer and in the wilderness. In any case, we are trying out, testing, and realizing possibilities that we cannot attempt in the routinized and prescribed world. In leisure, we create the culture, play with ideas, and test seeming inconsistencies in ways that recreate the future.

### *No*

- A society must have an economic surplus to have leisure. If both children and adults are at a level of economic scarcity so severe that time is completely devoted to survival, then there is no time or energy for leisure. Pacific island cultures may have leisure woven throughout the day in their relative abundance and simplicity. But the Sahel desert in Africa is quite another matter. Even families may compete for scarce food in a famine. In extreme privation, there is no time or place for leisure.

- Leisure as we know it is a product of the industrial revolution. Factories, the efficient division of labor, and economic surpluses produced the designated times that made leisure possible. Productivity growth has now led to a society that devotes more and more time to the consumption of leisure goods and services. Leisure as the legitimate reward for productivity is part of an economic/social system that separates work and leisure. Further, postindustrial economic expansion identifies leisure as an economic sector in which consumption must be expanded. Leisure, then, is very much a product of a particular set of organizations and even ideologies.

- No matter how widespread play/leisure is, it is not basic. Most fundamental to human life are primary commitments such as work and primary relationships such as family. Businesses run efficiently with nothing arranged for leisure. Social bonding can take place as families perform their necessary tasks of maintenance and nurturing. Leisure is secondary to what is necessary and, therefore, not a human universal.

- As suggested by the multiplicity of definitions of leisure in this chapter, there is no consensus as to what leisure is anyway. Anything that vague and uncertain can hardly be a human universal. Play may be a human dimension, but leisure requires time and place. It takes particular forms in any culture. It is, thus, a construction of a particular time rather than a basic dimension of life. Further, the forms of leisure differ so widely among different cultures that finding the common elements that would make it a universal would seem an impossible task. As will be demonstrated in the next debate, even "freedom" is problematic. Leisure is a social construction of its specific culture rather than a human universal.

This debate illustrates how important definitions are for an exchange of ideas. Just how leisure is defined sets the terms of argument. Opponents who agree on terms may no longer be in opposition.

### **Debate: Leisure Is Free Choice**

The common definitions of leisure all make some reference to freedom, free choice, or at least discretionary time. How realistic is this assumption of freedom?

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### *Yes*

- The classic definitions of leisure from Aristotle on refer to freedom. To be realistic, this does not mean a total freedom *from* all constraints or limitations. Rather, it means that there is a real element of choice. It is freedom *to* engage in the activity or not. Leisure is distinct from necessity. That is its distinguishing characteristic. Leisure is chosen because of anticipated satisfaction in the experience, not because of social or economic requirement.

- Leisure is personal. It may involve other people, the culture, and forms of activity. It is, however, primarily personal. Its meanings are for the person. As such, there is a fundamental freedom. Over time, individuals develop leisure styles and commitments that fit them. Even longer-term meanings are developmental. We engage in activities because we are becoming something more in the process. If the activity is a social requirement, it is not leisure.

- Leisure is separate from our work, family, and community roles. It is never required by those roles. Dumazedier's definition is a standard for such separation. Leisure is "apart from" the necessities of our social roles.

- Leisure is a special world. As in Huizinga's approach to play, leisure creates its own separate world of activity. The playing field, the stage, and other leisure venues are special for that activity. They have their own boundaries that make free and creative activity possible.

- From one perspective, leisure is a state of mind. It is a special consciousness that includes a sense of freedom. Without that sense, there is no leisure, only an extension of all the obligations of life. For example, a picnic is just another chore for the mother/caregiver/manager unless she feels that it is an experience of freedom. That's what makes it leisure.

- When we define leisure as time, it is the "free" element that makes it leisure. It is "discretionary" time in that we have multiple options for its use. When there is only one possibility, that is not leisure. Leisure is "freedom to" do it or not.

- Further, leisure is experience for its own sake. It is what goes on in the process that is defining. For example, we may experience leisure with almost anyone. There is "family leisure," but it is not all nonwork activity when other family members are present. When caregiving and nurturing expectations allow for no choice, then even beach volleyball may not be leisure at all.

- It is, then, a matter of definition. Leisure from this perspective is defined by freedom. The term "existential" refers to selfhood that is created by decision and action. It is the existential element in human activity that creates leisure. And it is that element that makes it profoundly human.

### *No*

- It may be a matter of definition. Modern definitions are of two types. One argues that leisure is the product of modern society with its surpluses and division of labor. As such, leisure is not free but has to be earned. It is a reward of the system, not a human quality.

The second type of definition argues that leisure is a product of a particular culture. (See the previous mini-debate.) It is a social construction that incorporates the elements of that culture. Greek leisure was based on a slave system. Contemporary leisure takes place in a market economic system. Even the language we use to think about it is from a particular history of a particular culture. "Freedom" is what we call it; not a condition of life.

- Leisure is learned. We not only develop interests and learn skills in our particular communities, families, environments, and schools, but we learn from our friends and companions. We are not free in the sense of being independent and autonomous. We are products of our histories with all their limitations. Especially if we have been subject to some deprivation due to discrimination, we carry that lack of freedom with us all our lives. We learn in directed and limited ways.

- Leisure is contextual. How can we really be free when gender, race, economic class, culture, and everything else have shaped what we are able to learn and do? We do not magically become separate from the rest of our lives in our leisure. Rather, we are products of social conditions that impact everything we are and do. The separate world of leisure and play is an illusion, not a reality of life. Certainly not life in the real, crowded, segregated, and separated city.

- Leisure is role-related. We do most of our leisure with those who are related to us in other roles. We are still family members, workers, and community figures in our leisure. There are all kinds of expectations that limit and direct what we do in leisure, how we do it, and whom we do it with. Studies of the "leisure" of employed mothers demonstrates what a struggle it is to secure a little time separate from those work and family roles. Often we can gain separation from such roles only in some act of dramatic abandonment. Certainly, with most leisure activity taking place in the residence, we are not free of our roles among those whose expectations for us never go away.

- Considerable leisure is highly structured. Sports and games have rules, admission controls, spatial lines, and position expectations. How we play is anything but free. We either do it consistent with the rules or we are out of the game. To a lesser degree, almost all activity has structures. We cannot act freely, any way we please. Perhaps only the imagination is really free, and even that is subject to all the "rights and wrongs" that we have learned throughout life.

- What is "free time" when our obligations are never entirely completed? We always have some maintenance undone—the laundry or the dishes. We always have some things that others would like us to do. The obligations of life are endless. We may be able to manufacture some time for play, but it is never free. There is always a price to pay in what we leave undone. If free time were really what is left over after all else is completed, we would surely have no leisure at all.

- Even leisure as escape presupposes that there are obligations and expectations that remain in our consciousness. There has to be something to escape from, something that is still there. Leisure is mixed into life, into the realities of life that make demands on us. Further, in our leisure there are all the timetables, clothing requirements, and elements of

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acceptability that we must meet in order to participate. We are never free in the sense of separation from everyone and everything else.

- Leisure has commitments. Some commitments are to ourselves. We promise ourselves to practice the piano an hour a day, exercise three times a week, or spend more time with our children. Some commitments are to others. We make dates, join teams, and accept responsibilities. Once we make those commitments, we are not free to do whatever we like unless we are willing to pay some price. We break commitments at a cost to ourselves and often to others. Insofar as leisure is social, it is hardly free.

Is it all a matter of definition? Or are there realities of life today that place so many limitations on our actions that the very idea of "freedom" is a deception? If so, then what do we mean by leisure? We will explore various aspects of that question in other chapters.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which definition of leisure seems best for you personally? Why?
2. Which is best for research purposes? Why?
3. What are the most important limits to freedom in leisure?
4. How do we develop our ideas of leisure and play?
5. Can leisure ever take priority over life's obligations? How?
6. Do we have to "get away" to have leisure?
7. How much of our leisure is recreation?
8. Are play and leisure essentially the same?
9. Is there "good leisure" and "bad leisure"?

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## PART TWO

# Historical Perspectives



# CHAPTER 3 The Classics

Leisure is not a new concept. Rather, there are themes of leisure that have come down through the centuries and across languages and cultures. It would seem that there may be two fundamental approaches to leisure:

1. The first approach separates leisure from other domains of life. Leisure is seen as something different from ordinary life. The classic philosophers of Greece set this theme into Western culture. Some argue that modern leisure is a product of the temporal and spatial separations of industrial society. Leisure is clearly identifiable as quite different from work and the obligations of social relationships. The usual distinguishing mark of leisure, from this perspective, is its relative freedom.
2. However, many relatively simple cultures tend to have play woven into the daily round and rhythm of life. In contemporary Eastern cultures, leisure is also understood as more of a theme or integral element of ongoing life. Some Buddhist and Hindu scholars find leisure to be more of a state of being than a social realm. Leisure is found in the way of life of the human being.

In actual cultures, the distinction may not be so clear. Leisure may be both a dimension of life and of the social system. Freedom may be both individual orientation and institutionalized time and space. For example, according to the Dutch historian, Johan Huizinga, play is both an orientation of life that makes possible creative activity and a set apart time and space with its own forms and rules.<sup>1</sup> In the analysis that follows, we will find both approaches. Historical study, however, tends to approach leisure as a social, economic, and political domain of a social system, while philosophy tends to see leisure more as an element of life or even a set of values.

## Greek Ideals and Realities

### The Philosophical Ideal

There is no one "Greek" philosophy of leisure. Each of the two great philosophers of Greece, Plato and Aristotle, had a significant place for leisure in his scheme of thought. They agreed on its importance for the development and governing of the society. Further, they agreed that, however necessary, leisure is an end in itself and is essential to being a free human being.

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In Plato's philosophy of culture, being free meant not being a slave. Leisure is the time free for self-development and expression. More than freedom *from* necessity; it is freedom *for* engagement with the culture and especially the arts of music, poetry, and philosophy. In such engagement, the free person comes closer to sensing the meaning of the eternal "Ideas" or forms of meaning. True happiness comes in coming closer to what we are meant to be. Also, in such activity qualities of leadership for the state are enhanced (*The Republic*, Book 2).

Aristotle's approach to leisure (*scholē*) in Book 1 of the *Politics* begins by defining leisure as freedom from necessity. He proposes that there should be an elite leisure class supported to assure a wise and just government. Leisure is an end in itself, intrinsically good and the highest end of human activity. It is contrasted with work (*ascholia*), the play of children, and the restoration of recreation. Rather, leisure is a state of being, always desirable and never for the sake of anything else. It is in "a class by itself."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the use of such freedom has social and political meaning. Leisure is not self-centered or self-absorbed. Rather, it involves governing and preparing to govern. The personal development of leisure, coming closer to the fulfillment of one's nature, has an element of responsibility. Contemplation yields wisdom. Leisure is not just intrinsic pleasure; it involves putting rational principles in a middle ground of virtue and character that is the basis of being a good citizen (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2). Philosophy, the arts, and physical discipline are forms of activity that lead toward fulfillment and civil responsibility. Leisure has both a personal and a social ethic.

### The Social Reality

The social context of such an ideal, then, may seem contradictory. The relatively small cities (even Athens did not exceed a population of about 200,000) were planned for leisure with parks, baths, theaters, sports arenas, gymnasiums, and exercise grounds. There were academies of music, the arts, and philosophy. Lifelong learning was expected of those free citizens. Then there were public forums in which to meet and discuss the issues of the day. The city was planned for such fulfilling and civic activity.

The other side, of course, is Greek elitism. It was for free males only. Slaves, women, and the poor were excluded. Leisure was for the relatively few free males of property. Slaves, as many as four for each free male, did most of the necessary work. The poor were occupied with survival. Women were almost all confined to work in the home and "the only slave a poor man had was his wife." The majority did all the work, especially the routine drudgery, so the minority could exercise the freedom of leisure. Leisure, then, was more than a philosophical ideal; it was an economic, political, and social system. The society was deeply divided between the leisure class of privilege and the majority of slaves and servants. Wealth and gender separated the leisure class.

We tend to applaud the philosophy, urban planning, support of the arts, and social ethic of justice and principle. It is convenient to forget the human cost and the inequity. What is the reality of freedom that is so limited? What is the value of sexual openness when women and the young are relatively powerless? Or, is Greek society just a dramatic example of the way things have to be? Does "freedom from necessity" require a division

of labor? Does personal freedom for some require the servitude of others? At least it would seem that ideas of leisure reflect the nature of the social system and put in question the concept of leisure as a separate domain of life.

## **Debate 1: Leisure Requires an Exploited Class of Workers**

### *Yes*

- Greece is not the only historical example of a servant class producing leisure for elites. In fact, almost every complex culture-Ming and Ching China, Victorian Britain, colonial and precolonial India, and so on and on-has had a leisure class and a servant class. In some cases such as the antebellum South, that class was chattel slaves. In others, they were just poor and powerless. Nonetheless, historically high degrees of leisure have usually been associated with slavery or near-slavery. Servants designated by ethnicity, race, gender, or just poverty have done the "necessities" so that others might exercise their so-called "freedom." The "theory of the leisure class" applies to more than American capitalism.<sup>3</sup>

- In contemporary societies, the servants of the leisure classes are seldom actual slaves. They are, however, the relatively poor and powerless. Motel beds are made by undocumented workers who cannot protest low wages. All kinds of "service" occupations are paid at or near minimum wages. Servers in restaurants survive on tips, not hourly wages. The very nature of most tourism implies being cared for by others. Destination areas employ workers at such low wages that they have to be bussed in from low-cost housing enclaves. Someone has to make the beds and pick up the garbage. So tourism is priced to exploit local workers who have lost both their land resources and their traditional economies. Just list all the low-wage and entry-level workers who supported your last leisure trip or outing. Modern market leisure implies being taken care of by others who exist on low wages and tips.

- One classic leisure study, *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* by Sebastian deGrazia,<sup>4</sup> goes so far as to propose that few will ever experience the sublime state of what is called leisure. Writing from his Italian villa, he offers a vision of elite leisure that is separated from the ordinary pleasures of the masses. Claiming to be based on Aristotle, deGrazia seems to buy into the entire Greek social framework. Leisure is for the privileged few who can really appreciate it. But this requires that others do the chores to make it possible. He, of course, argues that culture and civilization call for such special freedom from necessity.

- Leisure is nonproductive. It is for its own sake. To be truly so separated from obligations, others must take care of what has to be done. After all, even leisure requires "infrastructure"-power, transportation, sewage, etc.-as a context for doing anything. Someone has to be productive so that others may be nonproductive. In a capitalist economy, this is made possible by rewarding investment first and labor second. The system itself requires servants-however labeled-who do the daily work.

- Real leisure is not just time-outs from work. According to the classical theorists, leisure is a state of being, a quality of life. It transcends the daily obligations of life.

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Therefore, others must fulfill those requirements. Ordinary workers may have bits of time to strive for "fun," but leisure lifts the human spirit above such a negotiation and struggle. It is really a style or condition of life. Ordinary workers may be so worn down by toil that they lack the motivation or personal resources for real leisure.

- The Greek philosophers agree that leisure is best expressed in the arts: the contemplation of philosophy, the forms of poetry, the grace of music. To be skilled in the arts calls for practice and discipline. Even excellence in sport requires regular time and training. Such time and disciplined learning is supported by others who never have the opportunities to develop such skills themselves. Fine art and physical ability are supported by the commonplace, the servants of excellence. Most people can only struggle for minutes of escape and expression.

- The ideal, of course, is for mechanization and automation to become the nonhuman servants of the new age. Toil and drudgery will be assigned to machines, not people. That is a lovely dream, but it is not supported by actuality. In fact, it is the service occupations that are growing. Nursing homes, restaurants, and hotels are hiring the new servant class while factories and offices become electronically automated. Even there someone punches in the credit card data and task specifications. Servants remain in even more interchangeable roles, but are increasingly invisible to those who are served.

### *No*

- There are some examples of societies of relative abundance that do not have any distinct servant class. Rather, leisure is a part of the rhythm of daily life in an inclusive way. Such societies are rather different from modern mass society. They are simple, small, and based on easy access to natural resources. They are integrated and inclusive. They may be rare, but they are possible.

- Contemporary societies, of course, are on a larger scale and are far more complex. Nevertheless, there are provisions for ordinary people. Life for the masses, too, has a kind of rhythm. There are times and places for productive work, whether in factory, office, or home. There are also times and places for play. The week has its rhythms of weekends. The year has periods of disengagement of seasons and vacations. The benefits of an economy may not be equally distributed, but neither are they totally denied to many. A worker may well be a servant for eight hours and at play in off-times.

- Further, modern societies provide leisure opportunities for the masses. There are public programs and facilities in most communities. National parks and forests are open to those who can afford to get there. The market sector offers more and more diverse leisure opportunities. Las Vegas and Disney World are hardly elitist or exclusive. Television is everywhere at little cost. Leisure opportunities are there, even for the new service class that spends its working hours taking care of the needs and wants of others.

- Most leisure does not require anything special. It is day-to-day interaction with friends and family, activities around the residence, and available electronic entertainment. It may be ordinary, but it is inclusive. It is not special or specialized.

- Almost everyone has the modest resources to engage in such ordinary leisure as well as in occasional special events. The average work week of forty hours provides the time. The 80 percent with above-poverty incomes has some financial resources. Leisure doesn't have to be expensive. Some may envy the elites who spend \$2,000 on a single night of luxury lodging, but they still do many of the same things in a different style as do the masses. Leisure has been made a viable reward for those who contribute to the economy at all levels.

- The average household spends about 8 percent of its income directly on leisure (see Chapter 11). Surely that is enough to support a variety of activities and possibilities. Such household spending patterns are not exclusive, but are a taken-for-granted part of life for all but the poor.

- The exclusive models are just wrong. Writers such as deGrazia just do not understand that fixing up an old car may be as creative as poetry or the ballet. Gardening may be as deeply satisfying as sculpture or painting. Riding a motorcycle may be as exciting as downhill skiing at Aspen. The "leisure class" arguments are more than a little snobbish.

- The automated factory and office are here. It is true that we have not solved the problem of an equitable distribution of work and leisure. The possibility, however, is there to diminish the dominance of work and extend the possibilities of leisure. Even if we grant that the potential of leisure is currently restricted, the economic resources are available to lift more and more lives above routine and necessity to new potentials of self-determination and freedom. It will require a redistribution of work, income, and household responsibilities. It will call for giving up privilege by some and a sharing with others. There will have to be hard political choices. But societies do change.

## **Rome: The Politics of Leisure**

Like the Greeks, the Romans built and planned for leisure. However, their stress on law and custom rather than learning and contemplation gave leisure quite a different cast. The social and political context was also quite different. Rome itself was a large city governing a vast empire. The governing class was concerned about the possible revolt of the military and the masses, especially when unemployment ran high. The result was that leisure came to be more consumption than creation and a political instrument wielded by the aristocracy.

### **The Social Context of Leisure**

Like Greece, Rome was a stratified society with elites of wealth and power, ordinary citizens, and slaves. As Rome grew, the population consisted more and more of small farmers driven off their land, workers displaced by slaves, and soldiers unneeded in peacetime. Like Greece, Rome built for leisure with baths, stadiums, gymnasiums, and forums. The wealthy built suburban villas with their own pools, gardens, hunting preserves, and libraries. There were facilities for soldiers to improve their fighting abilities. The elites

tended to be separated from poor citizens except for the slaves who served them directly. As the empire grew in power, this separation from the masses increased.

## **Leisure as Control and Consumption**

By the first century, Rome had become a city of a million beset by unemployment and underemployment. The political threat of a mass uprising was of great concern to the rulers. One answer was mass leisure. More than 150 holidays punctuated the calendar in the first century and grew to over 200 by the middle of the third century. These holidays were filled with mass entertainment to keep the masses distracted from political action. Entertainment was provided to dull dissatisfaction.

More than 800 baths were made available at nominal cost. Sport became mass spectacles with gladiators fighting to the death, violently contested chariot races, and circuses with simulated sea battles and wild animals imported to fight each other or political prisoners. The enormous Circus Maximus held 385,000 spectators.

Too much emphasis on the details of chariots, gladiators, and arenas may obscure their political purpose. Leisure in these mass entertainment forms was intended to preserve the political structure. The power of the ruling class and its economic privilege was not to be threatened, even by the masses with little power or privilege. Rather, they were distracted by spectacles that became more and more violent and colorful. Bloodshed and danger provided artificial excitement for those who packed the coliseums. Mass leisure was provided to those who had little political influence or satisfying economic engagement. The society was organized to preserve elite wealth and power. And for some centuries, the system was successful in its aim.

## **Debate 2: Mass Leisure Is Used to Control the Masses**

### *Yes*

- Rome is the most dramatic example of the use of mass leisure to divert social protest with entertainment. The conditions, however, are significant. Rome was a great city with masses of people jammed together. There was unemployment and underemployment denying large numbers of citizens both the satisfactions of constructive work and its rewards. There was elite political control with only a pretense of mass political participation. These conditions were seen as explosive. One answer was leisure that distracted the populace from such conditions. Fireworks and sports spectacles are not unique to Rome.

- In contemporary societies, there are still stadiums full of sports fans. Now there is also mass entertainment and especially television always there to entertain and distract. People identify with teams and stars rather than engaging in action of their own. Vast profits are made on media successes that are promoted as being something wonderful that “everyone must see.” Sports organizations such as the National Football League are designed for mass consumption via television as well as for the fans in the stadium. The profit is in the media contract, the mass distribution. Popular culture promotes the star system, even when such figures come and go rapidly. All of this creates a mass leisure system that

substitutes for any kind of significant action, especially anything that might threaten the system.

- Now a worldwide industry produces such entertainment. This entertainment is escapist, artificially exciting, and even violent. It utilizes sex, also often exploitative and violent, to attract viewers. It is a vicarious world that keeps imaginations occupied and time full without challenging anything fundamental. Further, it is mass entertainment that is available at all price levels so that no potentially disruptive segment of society is left out.

- Much work may be routine and boring. Much of the government with its bureaucracies seems out of reach and even out of control. Nevertheless, those who go along are rewarded with enough economic resources to join in the entertainment and enough security to accept the political system. The Romans called it "bread and circuses."

- There is an evident expansion of certain kinds of leisure. Most tend to provide artificial excitement of some sort. For example, is the appeal of gambling that it is exciting and involving without requiring any long-term investment in acquiring skill? Why are laws being changed to expand such possibilities when the economic benefits are questionable and uneven? Does the society have to provide entertainment that is more and more exciting and distracting?

- The theme is that mass leisure provides for having fun without challenging the system. In fact, the entertainment industries are more than mass diversion. They are at the same time one more way for a few to amass profits on their investments. What could be more system-supporting than that?

### *No*

- The focus on mass entertainment is too narrow. There are also countless manifestations of folk culture that are integrated into the round of life. Do-it-yourself involves more than just getting the chores done. All kinds of crafts, hobbies, and skills are part of the full panoply of leisure in every society. Art is ordinary as well as fine. Music is made in the home as well as the concert hall. Even sport is more engagement than being a spectator for some. Woven into the daily and weekly round of life are so many things that people do because they find them satisfying.

- As already introduced, the daily round of leisure is profoundly social. The relationships are more important than the activities in many cases. Even going to the mass spectacle of professional football is done with friends with social interaction essential to the experience.

- The market provides variety. There is entertainment. There are also all kinds of experiences made possible in the for-profit sector of the leisure economy. Not only equipment, but also the special places for physical activity, the arts, and social gathering are offered at a variety of price levels and styles. The market does respond to demand as well as create new interests. Too narrow a focus on mass entertainment misses that whole world of possibilities for doing things that are developmental, challenging, and even creative. Note especially the provisions for children that enable activity rather than passivity.

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- National parks are so crowded that some are being redesigned to minimize the impacts of crowds. There is clearly a desire to encounter the natural and the real. There are the forests, rivers, and mountains that attract so many, especially when they are accessible to population centers. There remains a desire for the real and authentic that is not extinguished by all the artificial entertainment and easy escape.

- Leisure is more than a reward for drudgery and compliance. Real productive work is not evil, even when it involves some efficient routines. The engagement-disengagement rhythm of life involves work and leisure, the productive and expressive, the individual and the social. The fact that there is escape and entertainment in the overall scheme does not mean that there is nothing else in life. Mass entertainment can be part of the balance rather than dominant.

- In a democratic political system, there is no need for such social control. Even though most citizens sometimes feel that they have little influence, in a representative democracy there are mechanisms of response and influence. Only a truly totalitarian system requires the kind of massive diversion of the Roman culture. After all, we can vote and no one has to watch the NFL (even though tax revenues may help pay for stadiums).

- What kinds of leisure do most people value most? Research suggests that interaction with those we care most about and activity in which we have invested to gain skills are the kinds of activity that most would least want to give up. Entertainment is fine in its place, but it is not everything in leisure or life.

- There is no need to overthrow a system that changes and is responsive. It is no accident that totalitarian regimes are in retreat in most of the world. Those that remain will in time succumb to the forces of the global culture and economy. Of course, every society has problems that need to be addressed. Most change is gradual and evolutionary. Political change may be slow and uneven, but suppression of dissent is not so complete that systems of control need to eliminate critical thought or action within the system.

### **The Repression of Leisure**

The opposite side of mass entertainment and the promotion of leisure is repression and regulation. In some cases, leisure is seen as a threat to the social order. Rather than provide entertainment, the society limits and regulates leisure. There are a number of historical examples. Probably the two most often cited and studied are Puritan New England and the Victorian era of the early industrial age.

The Judeo-Christian religious heritage has been ambivalent about leisure. On the one hand, there has been the glorification of meditation and contemplation as both religious devotion and leisure. On the other hand, the early Christian church adopted a Greek dualistic philosophy through the influence of the apostle Paul. In this dualism, the "spirit" is considered to be good and the material to be evil. The body itself is a "tomb" and indulgence of the body and its pleasures is evil. Jewish ethics tend to be more holistic, affirming history as the arena of divine action and the whole of human life, body, and spirit.

## **The Puritan Social Ethic**

The aim of the Puritan social ethic was to establish a theocracy, the city of God on earth. Underlying the ethic of obedience was the ancient dualism that the body needed to be subdued and controlled. The "flesh" and its pleasures were to be held in check by personal discipline if possible and by community regulation if necessary. Further, in the Massachusetts Bay colonies, only 4,000 of the 16,000 who migrated in the 1630s were church members and considered capable of participating in governing the colony.

Restrictions on merriment were especially rigid on the "Lord's Day," when all games and sports were forbidden and even walking limited to necessity. The "blue laws" of Sabbath observance and public conduct were imposed by the "saints" on the entire colony to create a godly commonwealth. Further, in an economic condition of privation and scarcity, "no idle drone" was tolerated. All were to do their share of the work so that the colony would survive and prosper.

There were some amusements allowed. Other than on Sunday, there were games and sports enhanced by eating and drinking at festivals. However, public displays of affection were considered wanton, and dancing lascivious. For a time the theater and all sorts of gambling were banned. Wasting time was evil. Hunting and fishing combined replenishment of the community larder with pleasure. The militia gathered for drill and shooting matches and often adjourned to the tavern. The basic rule was that no one was allowed to break community solidarity with public offense to the moral codes. Private pleasures such as those associated with courting were permitted as long as they did not become publicly offensive.

Of course, in time the majority of "strangers" who were not regenerated church members rebelled against such restrictions and challenged the Puritan ethic. The theocracy was splintered by diversity and growth. The breakdown of the religious and moral consensus provoked an attempt to control deviant behavior with more extensive blue laws. As they were compromised and eroded, the attempts of the godly to regulate the life of the community were focused on the Sabbath and the control of leisure on that "holy day."

## **The Industrial Worker and Victorian Repression**

In the early part of the 19th century industrial revolution, the repression of leisure had a more pragmatic and less religious basis. When the work week was six days of more than twelve hours a day, Sunday was the only time for rest and escape. Further, poverty limited opportunities for expression. As a consequence, drinking to excess was common among workers. Not only did this have impacts on the family, but also it often rendered workers unfit to return on Monday. In fact, "Saint Monday" too often was an unholy holiday for those recovering from Sunday.

There were many attempts to deal with the problem. Working-class churches were supported by mill owners. "Sunday schools" were begun for children who spent the week in the mills and mines. Programs of education and "constructive" recreation were established by reformers. Settlement houses were opened to offer practical education to women and children in their hours away from the factory. And, of course, there were all kinds of

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laws regulating behavior. Taverns were licensed and hours limited. Even ethnic celebrations were regulated as to time, place, and behavior. Despite the moral pronouncements, however, the greatest concern was with drinking and its effect on productivity. Blue laws governing Sunday behavior had economic as well as religious purposes.

### **Asceticism versus Expression**

The conflicts over leisure often seemed to be conflicts between religion and leisure. That conflict continues in societies in which there are close ties between the government and religion. In most societies, however, there has been accommodation, reconciliation, and even cooperation between religious and recreation institutions. Mainline churches now offer recreation programs as part of their efforts to recruit members and form communities of interaction. There remain other religious bodies that separate themselves from the mainstream culture and actively resist many aspects of leisure and expression.

The main conflict is more one between asceticism and expression than between religion and leisure. The debate can be put in philosophical terms. Is the chief aim of humankind to be productive (*homo faber* in Latin) or to play and develop (*homo ludens*)? In theological terms, is life to glorify God or to express what it means to be human? Those who stress work and worship tend to promote life that is disciplined and ascetic, a life that is focused on what is considered to be ultimately worthy. Those who stress expression and self-development tend to glorify the freedom and self-justifying activity of leisure. Value systems that exalt work and seriousness stress community and the basic institutions of the society: economic production, religious devotion, and family stability. Whatever distracts from them is condemned. Those who stress expression and creativity, on the other hand, tend to focus more on the development of the individual.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How can leisure be free when others are enslaved or forced to serve?
2. Does leisure require an economic base of surplus rather than scarcity?
3. How does leisure reflect the social system in North America?
4. How does the government support and promote mass entertainment through licensing and taxation policies?
5. Are there still government attempts to regulate leisure? Give examples.
6. How does religion still attempt to control leisure in the local community?
7. Does any community have to set limits on behavior that does not directly injure others? Why?
8. Is there something inherently dangerous about the relative freedom of leisure?

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## CHAPTER

# 4

## Work and the Industrial City

**I**ndustrialization created a different society. The acceleration of change in Western societies gathered such momentum by the middle of the 19th century that nothing was left quite the same. The spatial and social ordering of life, the security of tradition in the small town, the passing on of trades and land from generation to generation, and the agricultural cycle of seasons and harvests were pushed to the periphery of the society. Now it was the city, the railroad, the factory, and the machine that dominated.

There was conflict as well as change. Conflict between mill and mine owners and wage workers involved safety, hours, conditions, and wages. The drive for productivity led to programs to control the workers' leisure as well as their work. For decades, production was labor-intensive, employing women and children as well as men. Sixty hours and more were the normal work week, and wages were a few dollars a week. It is no wonder that the city and the factory changed every aspect of home and family, as well as work itself.

### Industrialization and the City

The Civil War had spurred industrialization in the North and brought to an end the slave-based economy of the South. New citizens from Europe entered through the New York gateway and stayed in the cities of the Northeast. Electricity and the gasoline reciprocating engine began to revolutionize the home and transportation. The day of the gaslight, horse, and dispersed agricultural economy was almost over.

Cities had been centers of commerce and culture, of government and retailing. The new city surrounded the factory, demanding power, raw materials, transportation by river and rail, and *people*. The factory replaced handwork and crafts with machines. The factory also required concentrations of capital as well as labor. The new world was one of iron, steel, and power. For workers, it was also a world of crowding, danger, privation, and a life dominated by work.

In Britain, there were the new textile factories and the flows of raw materials and manufactured goods throughout the empire. In the United States, change involved the steam engine in ships and railways, electric lights and power, radio, the mass-produced automobile, and in the office, the typewriter and calculating machine. Between 1850 and 1900, everything was transformed.

But it was the factory that made the new city. Interchangeable parts and mass production were introduced into gun making, all kinds of metal products, electric motors, gasoline engines, and eventually the car. The sewing machine was introduced into the clothing factory by 1850. Steel production rose from less than 100,000 tons in 1870 to 25 million tons by 1910. Railroads increased their freight hauling from 10 billion tonmiles in 1870 to 150 billion forty years later.

Change accelerated in the first half of the 20th century. The population of the United States doubled to 150 million, life expectancy increased from fifty to almost seventy years, per capita income went from \$231 to \$1,870, and the number of automobiles soared from 13,000 to 44 million. The society after 1850 became industrial and urban.

## **Life in the Industrial City**

To bring in the raw materials, most cities grew at harbor sites or where rivers joined. Factories tended to be centralized. The workers at first were within walking distance of the factories, crowded into tenements lacking elementary sanitation or privacy. Workers came from the old world and from poverty-ridden rural areas. They came to shacks and slums to fringe areas and tenements. In mining towns, they were housed in company barracks and paid in script usable only in the company store. They came pushed by poverty and persecution because there was work, food, a roof, a bed, and the hope for a better tomorrow.

The sixty-hour week with Sunday off became the standard. In the early 1900s, child labor laws removed those under twelve, and then fifteen, from the mine and plant. Women tended to be at the sewing machine and men in the fabricating mill. Wages of \$5.00 a week required the entire household to work to survive. Workplaces were dangerous. Illness and accident ended a worker's income and increased the burden on the remainder of the family. To the mill owner, workers were replaceable and far less costly than machines.

Of course there were protests. There were over 2,000 strikes between 1880 and 1900. Some were so bitter that armed militia were used to crush the workers and "preserve public order." In the Homestead steel strike, twenty workers were killed and 3,000 fired. Most of the millions who struck before 1900 were defeated by the united power of industrialists and the government.

By the turn of the century, industrialists had increased productivity by introducing more machines. Under union pressure, working conditions improved and hours were reduced. The workday was shortened to about ten hours and the workweek to six days. Urban transportation improved so that workers were dispersed more widely and crowding was somewhat alleviated. As children left the factories, they were gradually absorbed into schools that kept factory hours. After school there were delivery and cleaning jobs and the streets for play.

By 1960 city dwellers were more than 70 percent of the population occupying 1 percent of the land. The industrial city gradually spread out from its original tight rings to neighborhoods linked by transportation and communication. Racial and ethnic segregation characterized the city, determined by waves of immigration, discrimination, and poverty. Many who could fled the city for the safety and space of the suburbs. In time, the metropolis expanded cities to ten times their early industrial size.

## **The Work Schedule**

There have been many significant changes since 1850. It required a century for the average workweek to be halved, from as high as 80 hours in the beginning of the factory era to 70 in 1850, 65 in 1870, 62 in 1890, 55 in 1910, 45 in 1930, to about 40 in 1950. The decrease in hours came at a decreasing rate. Factors in the reduction included union pressures, social reform efforts, and the greater efficiency of the mechanized assembly line. Manufacturers came to realize that long hours were less productive.

People gradually came to have more time. A common union slogan was "eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for what we will." There was even time for pleasure on Sundays, weekday off hours, and eventually a half or whole day on Saturday. There were paid holidays (sacred and secular), factory "down times," and eventually the vacation.

The social timetables still revolved around work and the necessity to operate the factory and the office in a synchronized way. Yet, life could also be divided between work on the one hand and family/leisure on the other. Increasingly the geography of the city, together with the factory and office schedule, divided the domains of life. From one perspective, this division is the beginning of modern leisure. It can be seen as separate, at least from the times and places of work.

At first everyone was in the factory—men, women, and children. In time, however, children were barred from the workplace and women became less likely to stay in the mills once they warned and bore children. The factory not only separated people from the land, but also separated families from each other by gender as well as age. Employed women were in gender-segregated industries. More and more, men became the "provider" and women focused on home and family. Women were in the paid workforce mainly in conditions of economic necessity. Work at home was directed toward women, unpaid and considered of marginal economic value.

## **The Struggle for Leisure**

There was concern about the leisure of workers. As outlined in the previous chapter, the focus was on the loss of productivity due to Sunday dissipation. Apprehension was expressed from church pulpits and in editorials about the inability of industrial workers to develop leisure that would contribute to work and family life. Of course, the work schedule kept the machines operating as long as was considered efficient and productive. Shorter hours and better working conditions developed slowly as mill owners found they led to increased productivity and fewer accidents. The so-called "work ethic" was hardly universal among workers who experienced the power of owners to shape their lives. The workplace was an area contested over conditions, hours, and wages.

At the same time, there was a struggle for leisure, time, and freedom of expression. Industrialists joined with social reformers, religious organizations, and political machines to offer to workers leisure alternatives that did not threaten the social order or reduce productivity. Control was exercised over ethnic celebrations imported from the "old country" and over bars, drinking, gambling, and disruptive "street" activity. Nonetheless, alcohol

was common and gambling continued on boxing, cockfighting, cards, animal combat, and other contests. Most went underground as did the consumption of alcohol during Prohibition. Workers rebelled against such regulation and subverted the system of control by hiding places of such recreation and bribing the police. Women protested their legally limited economic, political, and leisure rights and opportunities. Unions began their long fight for better working conditions, fair wages, and time for leisure.

During this period of struggle, there were the thousands of strikes and demonstrations of resistance in the workplace. There were also conflicts over leisure and resistance to attempts to control activity away from the workplace. Alternatives to such self-organized leisure began to be offered by private institutions, public agencies, and the market.

## **The Recreation Movement**

The recreation movement was in its inception a humanitarian response to the city. Children were being arrested for swimming off piers in New York. The only playgrounds were the streets. Reformers such as Joseph Lee, Jacob Riis, Luther Gulick, and Jane Addams worked to organize public concern and develop programs for the cities. In 1885, a little sand was placed in a Boston churchyard for neighborhood children. By 1900, a few small playgrounds and parks for recreation rather than just the strolling and carriages of the upper class were established. Just before and after World War I, provisions of neighborhood recreation centers became part of public programs in many cities. The more than two million acres in city parks in the 1970s had taken over a century for development. Among the significant events were:

- 1820-1840: Some schools and colleges provided outdoor gyms and sports areas
- 1853: Land purchased for Central Park in New York; the design was for strolling more than games and sports
- 1885: Sand garden at Parmenter Street Chapel in Boston
- 1892: Model playground at Hull House in Chicago
- 1892: 100 cities had designated land for parks
- 1905: Opening of the South Parks in Chicago
- 1906: Playground Association of America organized with support of President Theodore Roosevelt
- 1924: President Calvin Coolidge called the first Conference on Outdoor Recreation
- 1930: National Recreation Association formed, first national congress in 1932
- 1945: North Carolina established first state recreation commission

The reformers in the recreation movement protested the indifference toward those working in the factories and their living conditions. Coming from schools and churches, they protested child labor, degrading working conditions, low wages, unemployment, the health threats of tenement living, and even the compliance of government officials in suppressing worker protests. Some were especially concerned with the lack of opportunities for children and youth to play, learn, and develop healthy bodies and minds. They saw children with no place to play and the consequent waste of human lives. They were also

concerned that "healthy exercise" replace activities that rendered workers unfit for their sixty hours in the factory.

Constructive leisure was considered by Joseph Lee and others to be essential to rebuilding the industrial city to support life, health, and human growth and development. Play, while providing its own intrinsic motivation, was essential to the full development of human life from childhood on. It therefore was a public responsibility to provide opportunities for everyone to engage in constructive play and recreation. The public recreation movement was from its beginning reformist and political as well as humanistic and inclusive.

The public sector was joined by numerous private organizations. Luther Gulick, for example, was director of physical education for the YMCAs in the United States. Jane Addams' Hull House on the near-west side of Chicago combined recreation programs with education, health, and political organization. Urban churches joined in the provision of neighborhood opportunities. On the local level, countless women and men worked for better conditions of education, housing, sanitation, and recreation. For the most part, the private organizations complemented public programs in their more age-focused and localized efforts. In some communities, the mill and mine owners also opened various institutes for the education and recreation of their workers.

### **Market Sector Recreation in the City**

Some of the market sector provisions of recreation were precisely what was decried by the reformers: places for drinking, gambling, and fighting. There were dance halls where female textile workers met men from the factories to the despair of those who would protect the virtue of women.<sup>1</sup> In the crowded city, it was difficult to find any place to gather for leisure of any kind. In the emerging ethnic neighborhoods of the city, the tenement doorways and porches became alternatives to the crowded flats in warm weather. Men met in taverns and illegal shebeens.

In time, a variety of amusements dotted the city streets. The Bowery in New York combined melodramas and variety acts with the atmosphere of smoke, beer, and sweat. Theaters offered melodramas and such extravaganzas as Buffalo Bill's Wild West, Rocky Mountain, and Prairie Exhibition that played to over a million people in a five-month tour with cowboys, Indians, stagecoaches, and even Sitting Bull himself. P. T. Barnum's circus was a national institution by the 1840s. Burlesque, vaudeville, and other entertainment shared the stage with drama. There were dance halls, shooting galleries, bowling alleys, pool halls, and beer gardens.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the century, the electric trolley transported people to amusement parks on the outskirts of the cities. Coney Island in New York had bathhouses, minstrel bands, dance halls, shows, and a series of exciting rides. Chicago's midway at the World's Fair of 1893 introduced the Ferris wheel, soon duplicated in hundreds of the trolley parks.

Attempts to ban various "unhealthy" activities and venues in time turned to regulation. Selling alcoholic beverages required licenses. All gathering places such as theaters and dance halls required licenses and inspections. Hours of opening and closing were con-

trolled. The churches continued in their efforts to control activities on the Sabbath. Ethnic holiday celebrations were policed and even shut down if they were considered a threat to public order. Yet, the range of market-sector recreation provisions continued to expand, especially as wage levels increased and factory hours were reduced.

At the same time, the scale of such amusements changed. The neighborhood penny movies were replaced by the great movie palaces owned and developed by national syndicates. The film industry became dominated by a few corporations that controlled both production and distribution. Sports became spectacles to be consumed as leagues were organized and franchises sold as profit-producing enterprises. In time, government and business combined to control the airwaves for radio, television, and electronic communications. The neighborhood scale of commercial entertainment became national and, in the end, global.

### **The Rise of Spectator Sports**

Even before the Civil War, there were major sporting events for males. As many as 100,000 crossed the Hudson River from New York for horse races. Boxing was generally illegal, but drew crowds in the back rooms of saloons, warehouses, and outdoors where authorities could not enforce the prohibitions. By the 1860s, athletic clubs promoted track and field meets, gymnastics was sponsored by the YMCA, and colleges began intercollegiate football.

For the upper classes there was lawn bowling, tennis, the hunt, polo, coaching, cycling, rowing, and other elite sports. In time, many filtered down to the working class as well. The peculiarly American sport was baseball. By 1845, some men had formed the Knickerbocker Club and adopted rules specifying nine men to a side, three outs to an inning, and twenty-one runs as the winning score. The first teams were composed of "gentlemen," but by 1855, the Eckford Club in Brooklyn was made up of mechanics and shipwrights. The sport moved west. By 1858, Chicago had four teams. The National Association of Base Ball Players was formed to organize the sport nationally. In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings became the first professional team to tour. In 1871, the amateurs of the National Association lost a dispute with the professionals. Within a few years, the players lost control to the owners and the present economic basis for professional sport was established.

In the "trickle-down" patterns, elite sports were adopted by the middle and lower classes. The roller-skating rinks for the wealthy in Newport led to popular arenas in cities across the country. The first recorded football game between Princeton and Rutgers in 1869 was revived by Harvard and Yale three years later. By 1888, 40,000 attended the Princeton-Yale contest and football as a mass spectator sport was under way. Again, note that such sports were originally primarily for upper-class males. In time, working-class men, not women, entered the playing fields, often against considerable opposition.

The trends were evident: elite inauguration leading to mass adoption, professionalization, and the growth of spectator sports. Sport became a major form of urban recreation in its marketed provisions of mass entertainment.

## **Did the Industrial Revolution Create Modern Leisure?**

Certainly, the new industrial city was nothing like the agricultural small town. In size crowded conditions, and living arrangements, the city was a new creation that change every aspect of life. Working conditions in the mine and mill were nothing like those the farm or home-based handcrafts. The family was divided by the age and gendered division of labor. The home and the workplace were separated. The entire social timetable became based on factory schedules rather than the rhythms and seasons of agriculture. Formerly separated ethnic and racial groups were jammed together in the same city, factory, and sometimes neighborhood. Space in and around the living quarters was reduced by the need to have masses of workers near the factory.

In the process of change, leisure was also transformed. It became time segregated from work rather than interwoven into the round of the day and week. It became more secularized and cut off from religious influence. It moved from the crowded tenement to places where workers, especially men, could gather. It was a break and escape from the long hours and dangerous conditions of the factory. And in time, it became more and more a matter of being entertained in the commercial leisure places. Leisure was regulated and organized in the time and space scarcities of the industrial city.

## **Industrialization and the Work Ethic**

From the preceding outline of change, it is evident that the nature of industrial work had become quite different from former crafts, especially those associated with agriculture. It would be expected that meanings of work would be changed in the process. Yet, there was an old tradition that life should have work at its center. In fact, according to some traditions, work was a central value for life, with leisure seen as peripheral or even a danger. This tradition of the Puritans was claimed to be a consequence of the European Protestant Reformation in the 1600s.

## **Religion, the Reformation, and the Work Ethic**

One consequence of the Protestant Reformation was to shift the attention of the faithful from the heavenly world to the earthly world. The Reformation is credited with focusing on the work of this world. Martin Luther's writings are full of the concept of the secular calling, the idea that God calls people to their work in commerce and agriculture as much as to prayer and holy orders. His stress on "salvation by faith alone" placed a new emphasis on work and the joys and responsibilities of family life.

In Geneva, Switzerland, John Calvin took up the same themes and intensified certain aspects of them. To develop a city government, he added stress on the responsibilities of citizenship and the common life. He also added a religious motivation for engagement in the commerce of the world at a time that business and trade were developing. As commerce became more widespread and complex, the early modes of capitalism began to

emerge. Money became a medium of investment as well as of exchange. It was also a standard of accomplishment that could be measured and compared. The feudal focus on titles, land, and inherited status was broken by adding the control of financial resources for investment as well as spending.

### **Max Weber: The Rise of Capitalism**

Over three centuries later, Max Weber, a German sociologist, attempted to combat the Marxist argument that history was essentially determined by economic or "material" structures and forces. Weber tried to demonstrate that ideas, even religious ones, could be factors in shaping economic change.<sup>3</sup> He noted that capitalism was most developed in Protestant-dominated areas of Europe and especially those where Calvinist influence was strongest. His argument can be outlined as follows:

1. Capitalism requires the availability of capital. To attract capital, there must be an acceptance of the idea that money can make money, that investment should be rewarded.
2. The connection between capitalism and Protestantism is an ethic that stresses life in the secular world of work as a sphere of faithful activity.
3. Paradoxically, such a this-worldly ethic is based on a doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God in which humans can do nothing to gain their own salvation. However, they can demonstrate the likelihood of their divine election in the manner of their earthly lives.
4. These qualities of earthly life include a devotion to work, sobriety, discipline, and consequent economic success. Such "this-worldly asceticism" means that the profits from business success cannot be spent on pleasures, but are available as investment capital. The work ethic combines with a lifestyle of carefulness and discipline to further the development of capitalism. This lifestyle, according to Weber, denies personal pleasure in order to invest one's life properly in the church, family, state, and economic enterprise.

Later analysis has raised many questions about the accuracy of Weber's historical analysis, but the idea of the work ethic has taken on a life of its own. Further, the idea has been useful in understanding the expansion of this value system, especially in its Puritan form, to England and the New World. More recently a secular form of the work ethic has been separated from its religious origin. No one argues that there is anything peculiarly Protestant about a work ethic that glorifies a secular calling to productivity. Further, it is hardly surprising that a work ethic has been promulgated by those who benefit from it most, those who invest themselves and their capital in productive enterprise.

What is the current relevance of the work ethic? There is little question that a serious view of life and work has characterized many of those who gather capital and operate businesses on America's Main Streets or those whose financial interests have been improved by the hard work of others. There is evidence of the centrality of work to many who have a career orientation, the idea that hard work today will lead to a better economic future.

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There is also evidence of the continued relevance of a negative aspect of the work ethic. There is still a suspicion that leisure, especially in its pleasure-seeking forms, may be a danger to both the individual and the community. Recreation as a restoration for work is justified by its contribution to productivity and health. But leisure as activity done primarily for the experience, especially if that experience is one of pleasure rather than constructive development, is not accepted as a positive value by many with some residue of the work ethic and its this-worldly asceticism. There may even be vestiges of Puritanism hiding beneath layers of the culture.

### **Industrial Work and the Work Ethic**

The history of work conditions in the mine and mill sketched earlier, the decades of conflict and strikes, and the excesses of Sunday leisure do not support the likelihood of a strong work ethic among those workers of the early Industrial Revolution. There was more a struggle for survival, often against those whose investments built the factories of industrial capitalism. It seems unlikely that a strong work ethic from a period of crafts, agriculture, and small business would have survived generations of life and death in early industrialization.

Nonetheless, the myth of the work ethic survived. It was reinforced by waves of immigration from Europe and later from Asia, bringing workers who believed in the "American dream" that hard work would yield a better life. Such an ethic was promoted as an ideology by those who believed that in time a growing economy would benefit all, or at least more, of the workforce. Ethnic, racial, and gender barriers to rewarding work tended to be ignored by those who had gained access to some level of the system. At the same time, work conditions of safety and hours were improving. Wages went up as hours went down. Eventually, the regularly employed American worker had a very different life from that of workers in those earlier days of deprivation and danger.

But there was more going on in the workplace than an improvement in conditions, hours, and wages. The factory, with its expensive machinery, and the competitive marketplace placed a greater and greater emphasis on productivity. The changes are now referred to under the labels of "Taylorism" and "Fordism."

Friedrich Taylor applied the stopwatch to design time-and-motion studies of production processes. His "scientific management" divided tasks to their simplest components and reassembled them to maximize efficiency. Every sense of fabrication and relationship to the product was sacrificed to make the worker an efficient component of the mechanized process. In the Bethlehem Steel Works, Taylor's designs increased steel-handling efficiency fourfold. In this scheme, the worker became a complex machine, to be routinized into maximum productivity. No consideration was given to making work fulfilling, challenging in complexity, or autonomous.

Henry Ford wanted to make automobile manufacture a mass production rather than craft operation. To make the Model T, he redesigned the factory and production line into standardized, repetitive processes. The consequent productive efficiency produced a car that the masses could afford. At the same time, he paid his factory workers the unheard-of wage of \$5.00 a day so that they might become consumers of the product they built. The

key to this "Fordism" was absolute control of every motion of the production process. His aim was also to control the family and leisure lives of his workers. In their conformity to the factory and their application to productivity, they were to be rewarded by becoming consumers, not only of Model Ts, but also of the myriad products of the growing economy. Fordism combined mass production and mass consumption. Ford's experiment was barely the beginning. The great American production economy, especially in hard goods such as steel and cars, was the strongest in the world. Only since the mid-century has globalization threatened American economic power.

There were, however, questions raised about the modern production process. One was the alienation from the process and the product created by dividing tasks into their simplest components. Working became repetition rather than actually "making" something. Further, the modern factory made social exchange among workers difficult because of the pressures of the assembly line.

More recently, other threats to the meaning of work have emerged. The security of industrial employment has been eroded as labor-intensive manufacture has been moved to low-wage parts of the world. The contract of security between ownership and labor has been broken as plants have closed. Also, the reduction in manufacturing jobs has been accompanied by the increase in service-sector employment. In discount retailing, health care, and other such workplaces, lack of security has been joined with low wages. Households, as in the early industrial period, are often supported by several jobs, no one of which can pay the bills. The whole idea of a work career with anticipated progression in a single corporation or trade has been attacked by production and market globalization.

In such conditions, some have proposed the "leisure solution to work." If work has become insecure, unfulfilling, and largely instrumental, then the answer may be in the nonwork domains of life. Of course, the job may support the household and the family in its nurturing and supporting roles. It may also support leisure, activity in which an individual can find meaning and fulfillment. And there is also all of the consumption related to both the household and leisure. The purchase of both durable goods—the refrigerator and second car—and of pleasure are made possible by work, however uncertain and routine. This is "Fordism" carried into what has been called a "postindustrial age."

## **Debate: The Work Ethic Has Been Lost**

### *Yes*

- The work ethic was a good fit in a preindustrial capitalist economy. The results of disciplined hard work were immediate and evident. This connection, however, was a casualty of industrialization. The discipline of the factory was forced, not voluntary. Obedience to rules and routines is not an internalized ethic. The factory had its division of labor, detailed and synchronized tasks, and rigid articulation of worker and machine. The worker became just another means of production. No wonder a work ethic disappeared.

- The promoters of the work ethic in the 20th century were those who benefited from it—owners and managers in production and those in small businesses. They were usually those who used the labor of others or invested in its processes. Productivity is essential to competitive capitalism, especially now in a global economy. Those who lament the loss of

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the work ethic are often the same corporate executives who move their production to \$2.00 a day regions and "downsize" their own companies.

- The history of labor in the United States is one of resistance and conflict. The harsh and exploitative conditions of the mill and mine, with long hours and low wages, went a long way to kill the work ethic brought from the crafts of the old country.

- The value of work has become largely instrumental. Work is what we do to support a family, provide a home, buy a car, and finance a vacation. All kinds of research demonstrate that home, family, and even leisure are valued more than work by most of those who are employed. Now that more workers are in the insecure service sector rather than production, there is no indication of change. What is most important to most people is their relationships with those with whom they share life most fully and intimately.

- The contemporary economic stress on cost has been accentuated by the global economy. Even small businesses are in competition with the discount chains and their worldwide supply sources. In global capitalism, investment is rewarded first and labor is considered a cost of production. Why should workers be loyal to a company that is always ready and willing to eliminate their jobs to shave the costs of production 5 percent?

- Considerable employment now is temporary. Most of those in the paid workforce have jobs, not careers. Further, those jobs come in no particular sequence of advancement. Especially in the service sector, in which the skills of most jobs can be acquired in a few days or even hours, people are interchangeable. The former connection between hard work and a secure position with a career of advancement is lost. Many work long hours out of fear of being replaced, not from a positive motivation. The skills are now in the automated machine and the computer, not the worker. Or the remaining jobs mostly involve cleaning up. Entry-level wages at age thirty or forty hardly stimulate a work ethic.

- Finally, the traditional work ethic involves "this-worldly asceticism" as well as a devotion to the job. What kind of sense does this make in contemporary society? Ours is a culture of possession, consumption, and expression. Do it and flaunt it are the current watchwords. Go with the style. Buy the latest status symbol. Leap into the fad. "Godly, righteous, and sober" hardly describe the lives of the middle masses today, not to mention celebrities and the wealthy. This is a culture of display, not restraint. In fact, both themes of the work ethic are gone—the devotion to hard work and the restrained lifestyle.

### *No*

- Work is still a central identity for most adults. We introduce ourselves by what we do in the economy. Men and women wear corporate labels. Many women are now embarrassed to admit they are "just housewives and mothers," and men cannot accept being primary parents or "househusbands." Work remains a major source of pride, a sign of ability and worth. Even the retired claim the identity of their former work. Within the work context, there is still some pride in doing the job well. Work is a part of who we are and how we present ourselves to others.

- There are all kinds of new craft dimensions to many jobs. Computerization now requires new skills that have to be learned. Look at what is necessary in retailing to check out customers or complete the quarterly inventory. The information processing of even the smallest business is computerized and demanding. The hard and dangerous physical labor of the old factory has been largely replaced by electronic controls that call for intelligent maintenance and supervision, not back-breaking toil. Such work can be a challenge to continually acquire new skills.

- The work ethic has been contained, not lost. Of course there are routine jobs. There always have been. But those who have some control over their work destinies are more than ever motivated by a drive to do well and succeed. The "new class" of workers who have gained costly skills and are expensive to replace is likely to work hard and long. They see a connection between what they do and their own futures. They can tie rewards of status and income to what they produce on the job. And they tend to be well rewarded for their efforts. Granted that some jobs discourage a work ethic, but there are a significant number of those that do not.

- Work still gives us a sense of worth. We are rewarded with income and status because what we do is considered important. Nothing quite substitutes for that recognition. Further, most people want to make some kind of contribution to their society. Work may not be the only possibility for this, but it remains a central one. Even those who are retired often want to do things that are recognized as being of value, even when they are not paid for it.

- It is possible that we are slowly coming to redefine work. It is more than what we get paid to do. Rather, work is anything that is of value, that contributes to our common life. What is more important than caring for and nurturing children, a task for which most parents are not paid? Work may be satisfying because of its challenges, its worth, and its recognition. In fact, some paid employment is hardly work by those criteria. In the more inclusive sense, activity that is of social as well as economic value, that fulfills life, always incorporates work. In such activity, there is a built-in work ethic that is part of its essential meaning.

- There are any number of efforts being made to enhance productive work by giving workers more control over the process and more of a relationship with the product itself. Workers may move down the line with a car as a team and then drive it off the end of the line themselves. Redesigning jobs may increase both productivity and satisfaction. Pride may be instilled in programs to increase quality. Insofar as a work ethic requires certain work conditions, an ethic may be redeveloped by redesign.

- In many of the services, there is considerable human interaction. Someone who cares for frail elderly in a nursing home may be extremely underpaid, but may also gain some satisfaction in contributing to the comfort of those being cared for. Even conversation at the checkout counter can be enjoyable and yield a sense of relatedness and community. Such work is personal and direct with the meanings and satisfactions of human response and interaction.

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- There is also the possibility of transferring the work ethic to other domains of life. For many, the development of healthy and happy children is the most important work of their lives. For many, the satisfactions of developing and exercising a skill, once limited to work, may be found in leisure. One theme of the work ethic, doing something well, may be moved to other parts of life. The

work ethic may be transferred rather than lost for some people .

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have factories changed since the early days of the Industrial Revolution? Have computers really ended the drudgery of work?
2. How is work intrinsically rewarding? Can work involve play? How?
3. Who is working longer hours? Shorter? Who is most likely to have more than one job?
4. Can leisure provide an adequate solution to the problems of work?
5. What are the current dimensions of conflict between management and labor?
6. How is work gendered (different for men and women)?
7. Should we now learn to find most of satisfaction and meaning outside of work?
8. Can work hours be reduced further? Why or why not? How?

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# CHAPTER

# 20

## Outdoor Recreation

We go into the forest to hike, camp, ride, and play. We especially seek to be near water—to be in it, on it, and just see it. We drive hundreds and even thousands of miles to see great vistas of mountains, valleys, and shorelines. However, we also go into the backcountry to cut trees, mine coal and other minerals, and run our vehicles. We celebrate that the United States has over 300 million acres of land in public trust available for recreation. We are concerned that 70 percent of American shoreline is privately owned and largely closed to the public. We also question the ability of the government to manage such a significant resource well. As a consequence, public land, especially where demand is heavy, is conflicted territory. There are many unresolved issues concerning outdoor natural resource-based recreation.

### Outdoor Recreation Resources

More than 200 million acres of federal land are available for recreation of various kinds. States offer another 42 million acres, and local government bodies about 10 million acres. There are forests, lakes, rivers, mountains, deserts, trails, prairies, battlegrounds, and other sites of historic and scenic importance. Of the total, about half is forest, 9 percent wilderness, 10 percent fish and wildlife preserves, and 6 percent parks. Federal land in the mountain and coastal West, not including Alaska, makes up almost 75 percent of the total.

At these sites, people come to hike, fish, swim, hunt, climb, sail, canoe, tube, soar, race, run, sun, ski, camp, drive motorized vehicles, and enjoy countless other activities. In some areas, the managing agency offers facilities and access; in others there is no development of any kind. On or near some sites there are businesses that sell, rent, and repair all kinds of equipment as well as offer lodging, food, and other amenities. There is the quiet and even desolation of the wilderness and the crowds at an urban reservoir. All of this and more provide opportunities for many kinds of recreation.

The most popular outdoor activities, according to federal and market national surveys, are walking and hiking, swimming, fishing, camping, and operating various vehicles and craft on land and water. The most common activity is sightseeing from the car. Least common is going into remote areas for specialized activities. In all cases, however, there seems to be something special about being outdoors-somewhere in or near the water, forests, mountains, or other such locales. The environment is central to the meaning of the experience.

## National Resource Providers

The scope of natural resources held and managed by the federal government is unique in the developed world. What is now taken for granted is partly an accident of the vastness of land holdings in the West that are not suitable for farming, and partly a result of far-sighted leaders who recognized that opportunities once lost would be impossible to reclaim. Further, there was the conviction that these resources belonged to the people as a public trust. One side of that trust is preservation of such resources for all future generations. The other side is that the resources should be used and enjoyed in ways consistent with their preservation. As a consequence, conflict between those putting conservation first and those promoting certain uses is inevitable.

The **National Park Service** (NPS) of the federal Department of the Interior began with the great parks of Yellowstone, Yosemite, and the Smoky Mountains and later added historic and archeological sites. The mission was to preserve such resources in ways that made them available for use and appreciation. No hunting, commercial development, or harvesting of resources was usually permitted. The preservation mission, however, was to be balanced by recreational use. Camping, lodging, educational and scientific programs, and other enabling provisions were to be developed to enhance enjoyment that did not degrade the resource. With almost 18 million overnight stays and 260 million visits in the 300-plus national parks and monuments in 1990, conflicts between use and preservation are inevitable. Adding 56 million acres in Alaska in 1978 does nothing to alleviate crowding at the Grand Canyon or Yosemite. Now plans are being developed to manage uses in ways that conserve the resource and still maximize the experience for visitors.

The **U.S. Forest Service** (NFS) of the Department of Agriculture manages more than 200 million acres of forest, grassland, mountains, desert, and water. The forests have multiple uses, including recreation, timber harvest, mining, grazing, and other extractive industries. Mountainsides are leased and developed for skiing. Lakeshore sites are leased for resorts. Highways are developed for general transportation and scenic access. The NFS "land of many uses" is constantly being fought over by those with different interests, some appreciative and some extractive. Many recreation users want development of boat-launching ramps, ski runs and lifts, campgrounds, and trails. Others support closing areas with wilderness designation to any new development. Outside of Alaska, the Forest Service manages most of the land designated as national wilderness. The passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964 has led to continual conflicts between developers and those who argue that once a forest is cut, it can never be restored. Often in the middle are recreation users who want to preserve water and environmental quality and still have access to their backcountry sites.

The **Bureau of Land Management** (BLM) has increasingly been drawn into the conflicts. Originally a kind of residual depository for land not designated for parks or forests, it is now recognized that the BLM manages over 140 million acres in the fifty states that have value for the extraction of oil, minerals, and other valuable materials. There are also millions of acres of great beauty and environmental value. With about 70 million visits in 1990, the BLM has the same pressures for use and preservation as those faced by the NPS and NFS.

## PART FOUR / Forms of Leisure

There are also other federal agencies of importance. The Department of the Interior includes the Fish and Wildlife Service, which oversees more than 80 million acres of land and water intended as habitats for fish, fowl, and wild animals. Also in the Interior Department is the Bureau of Reclamation, which manages a number of major water projects, especially in the West. The Civil Works Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has entered the recreation field with the construction and operation of waterways and reservoirs. Increasingly, recreation uses such as boating have become major factors in Corps management and development. About 80 percent of Corps reservoirs are located within fifty miles of cities, creating 500 million recreation day uses annually.

There have also been a number of laws, regulations, and programs with recreation implications. Among these are the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, the Urban Open Space Land Program of 1961, the Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1964, the National Trails System in 1968, and the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires the study of the ecosystem results of proposed government actions. It is evident, then, that recreation is only one component of the complexities and conflicts of natural resource management.

**State recreation provisions** comprise only about one-sixth of the acreage of federal holdings. Some growth in state resources has been funded by the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which has now been cut back. Some states have elaborate park systems with premier sites developed since the 1930s. Other states rely more on federal provisions and on municipal and county programs. Nevertheless, attendance at state parks increased 400 percent in the four decades before 1990 to over 700 million visits. Now many states are promoting their recreation resources to attract out-of-state tourists.

There are local governments with considerable investment in outdoor recreation space. Most tend to be municipal areas for outdoor sports. There are, however, parks, forest preserves, and water resources offered by many cities and counties. Local recreation provisions tend to be quite uneven, especially when land values are highest in areas with the highest tax revenues.

### **The Market Complement**

While most of the attention is given to public land and water resources, there is also the market side of the overall picture. In some areas, the recreation resources are primarily private. On seashores or islands that are highly developed by resorts, there may be little public access to water or the beaches. On Hilton Head Island, major resorts control almost all water access. In Hawaii on the island of Maui, the miles of beaches lined with resorts are dotted with small public-access entries. The aim of most major developers is to control as much of the prime recreation space as possible.

On the other hand, there are many outdoor recreation areas where the public and market sectors are complementary rather than competitive. At or near public recreation areas, businesses may operate launching and boat storage facilities. They sell equipment and do repairs for the boats, windsailers, and other water toys. Near forests and lakes there are guide services, rental boats and fishing gear, rental rafts and canoes on the river, and flights into backcountry lakes. Businesses teach beginners how to kayak or boardsail,

climb the rock faces, and swim underwater. They sell, rent, and repair all kinds of equipment. They are, in fact, a necessary complement enabling use of the public land and water. This relationship may be seen most clearly in those resorts that are located on or near attractive public resources. In such cases, public management that maintains access and quality for the resource is crucial to the success of the business.

One issue, however, is the use of public land for commercial enterprises. When hotels and campgrounds in national parks are operated by businesses, they pay a limited franchise fee and meet certain contractual requirements to maintain what is often a monopoly at a public site. Critics argue that the fees tend to be too low for the businesses to pay their fair share of park maintenance and improvement. Also, in such a monopoly situation, the quality of the provisions may suffer. Supporters respond that the government should not be operating facilities that can be provided better and more efficiently by private enterprise. If contracts do not adequately protect the park or other resource, they can be rewritten and put up for bid when they expire.

There is the persistent question of who manages resources best. Proponents of privatization argue that business responds most fully to the market, to the demand for quality related to price. Advocates of public management reply that unique and fragile resources must be managed for their long-term conservation as well as short-term profit. Some believe that the apparent conflict misses the reality of an essential complementarity in which the public and market sectors can cooperate in doing what each does best. Businesses may best provide services within a framework of government management for the long-term protection of the natural resource. Business may run the ski lifts and snack shops without turning over the entire mountain to entrepreneurs.

### **Debate: The National Parks Should Be Run as a Business**

#### *Yes*

- Business is inherently more efficient than bureaucracy. Business is best at providing services, and national parks are now multiservice recreation destinations.
- The national parks are destinations for vacation travel. Such trips are part of household budgets. There is no reason to subsidize the destination when the rest of the trip is made at market prices.
- Parks in some areas are actually in competition with market destinations. The valleys outside Yellowstone have their upscale resorts, but the park is tax-supported. All tourist provisions should be on an equal basis.
- The park entry and facilities are a small part of the total trip cost. Market-level prices will seldom exclude visitors who can afford the rest of the trip.
- There can always be reduced group rates for educational and other special programs.
- For the most part, national park visitors are upper-income households that can afford market prices.

- The parks are currently underfunded and facilities are deteriorating. Market pricing would support adequate maintenance and improvements. Businesses would bring the facilities to a level of quality consistent with the resource.

- Current government cutbacks in expenditures are endangering the quality of the environment as well as facilities. Premier destinations can produce revenues at levels that will protect the park and the quality of the visitor experience.

- One way to reduce crowding is with pricing. One factor in current crowding is that parks are such a bargain.

- National parks are part of the entire network of the tourism industry. Yet, as prime destinations, they are excluded from the overall pricing system and distort the allocation balance. Operating the parks as businesses would allow the market system to bring demand in line with costs.

(Imagine what Disney could do with Yellowstone Park. Piped-in pressure could make Old Faithful erupt every twenty minutes on schedule. A monorail would skim over the boiling pools. A rainbow bridge would improve viewing the falls. The lake would have a marina and paddle boat concession. "Mountain men" would roam the streets as guides to the restaurants. Theme hotels would include the "Elk" with its tame herd, the "Bear" with play areas for human cubs, and the "Trout" with stocked fishing ponds. Improvements to the rustic old park would bring it up to world-class tourism standards.)

### *No*

- The national parks are so designated because they are unique resources and environments. They are not just ordinary destinations and should be managed as a public trust.

- National parks belong to all the people so access should not be determined by price. They merit tax support because they are national treasures, not local businesses.

- A number of surveys have found that most people want special environments preserved whether they visit them or not. There is what economists call "existence value," which takes a longer view than next year's vacation.

- Such environments should be managed for long-term preservation rather than short-term profit. Contracts limiting development can always be twisted or stretched. If the profit incentive is great enough, businesses will find ways to exploit the resource. Try meditating to the noise of backcountry heli-skiing.

- In publicly managed parks, private enterprise can still run the services under the terms of carefully drafted franchise contracts. Such contracts can be improved as they come up for renewal. Also, many services can be located outside the parks to reduce crowding in the parks.

- Limitations of use can, under public management, be based on fair methods and equal access rather than on price and discretionary income.

- The primary criterion for management of national parks should be to maintain them for all generations, not to exploit them for current markets.

- Such management should be based on scientific principles that are designed to put the resource first. Scientists are still learning what is best for different environments, and they should not be limited by long-term contracts.
- National park designation is a recognition of the significance of the resource, not a label to attract tourists.
- The Grand Canyon and other such parks are a world and national resource, not the basis for profit. The federal government is responsible to provide management based on such value, not on partisan budget fights in each year's congressional debate.

## What People Do in the Outdoors

As already indicated, the variety of activities in natural resource settings defies listing. The 1987 President's Commission on Americans Outdoors found that the most popular activities were walking for pleasure (50 percent), driving for pleasure (43 percent), swimming outdoors (43 percent), sightseeing (34 percent), picnicking (28 percent), fishing (25 percent), camping (21 percent), bicycling (17 percent), running or jogging (17 percent), bird watching and nature study (15 percent), motor boating and water skiing (15 percent), day hiking (12 percent), hunting (11 percent), off-road vehicle driving (11 percent), backpacking (5 percent), downhill skiing (5 percent), and cross-country skiing (3 percent)<sup>1</sup>. In general, those activities that are increasing in participation are those engaged in by older adults, the growing segment of the population.

Some go to natural environments primarily to experience them in some appreciative way. Others go primarily to engage in some activity requiring such outdoor space. Many combine the activities of such trips into bundles related to the resource. For example, lake side camping may combine the camping experience with swimming, boating, fishing, and hiking. One factor is the composition of the recreation group, especially the involvement of children. Camping not only offers access to the water and woods, but also engages the family or other group in common activity.

It would be neat to profile the "typical park visitor." Research, however, suggests that there is considerable variety just in the single activity of camping. For example, there are:

1. Budget campers using the campground for low-cost access to the resource
2. Travelers camping to save money
3. Sports-car couples with tents and bags packed for urban stops on the same trip
4. Student campers, both explorers going where no one has gone before and party campers using the site for group celebration
5. Family campers with foci on togetherness and nurturing, with older children who peel off to find same-age peers, and gender role players-men do provider tasks and go fishing and women stay in camp to do the maintenance and caregiving
6. Breakaway campers who seek separation and solitude
7. Comfort campers who bring all of the conveniences of home; they include power campers who are fully electrified and V campers with their RVs, TVs, and videos

8. Toe-in-the-water campers unsure about the trip but trying it for the sake of significant companions
9. Extractors who use the campsite as a base to forage for fish, game, rocks, or anything else that can be legally removed

The point is that there is no typical resource user. Some come in large groups for social interaction. Some come for solitude and separation. Some fish from boats with big motors and some hike to meditate. The variety becomes a problem only when the activities conflict and one activity degrades the experience for others. And each group seems to think that their activity should have priority and be protected from interference.

Among such users of outdoor environments are the "specialists" who focus on a particular activity. They may fish with flies in remote streams, climb unique rock faces, hike into the wilderness with minimal equipment, or take photographs of rare bird species. They are one kind of natural resource devotee who tends to support ecosystem protection and limits on uses. At the other extreme are those who want development for their kind of activity, such as Alpine ski resorts with multiple lifts, restaurants, shops, and lodges or condominium resorts on prime beaches. Most common are those who prefer management that provides for their activity, whatever it is, and limits all others.

## What Do People Want in Outdoor Recreation?

Not all visitors come to the land and water resources for the same purposes. They seek a variety of experiences. They may want to escape and get away, but usually they get away together in groups. They want an experience based on the natural environment, but that environment may range from the primitive to the highly developed. They want a break from ordinary routines and environments, but in a setting in which they can "be themselves" with a minimum of external expectations. They come to a variety of places: lonely mountainsides and crowded beaches. Yet, in all cases, there is something about the environment that makes the experience possible. Further, there has to be some "fit" between the resource and the kind of experience sought.

B. L. Driver of the U.S. Forest Service developed methods of examining the satisfactions of water- and forest-related recreation:

1. **Social:** family togetherness, being with friends, meeting new people, exercising leadership and sharing skills
2. **Personal expression and development:** reinforcing self-image, competence testing, discovery and learning of creativity in personal reflection and physical exertion
3. **Experimental (intrinsic):** stimulation, risk-taking, tranquillity, using equipment, nostalgia
4. **Nature appreciation:** enjoying scenery, closeness to nature, learning about nature, seeking privacy and space
5. **Change:** rest, escape from pressures and routines, avoiding crowds, getting away

Appreciation of the environment and the reduction of stress are common motivations for getting to the outdoor environment. Yet, there are also personal and social agendas that

people bring along with them. Everything impacts the experience. Moods and conflicts may be brought into the wilderness. Other visitors may change the conditions for enjoyment. Even the wilderness has rules and regulations. And the weather may spoil almost anything that is done outdoors. Like everything else in life, outdoor recreation is a multifaceted experience.

What, then, is the purpose of setting aside and managing natural environments? Is the primary purpose to preserve them or to enable them to be used? Which is more important—conservation or recreation? Or, are they really in conflict?

## Conflict: Users, Developers, and Preservers

Some would preserve natural environments for their own sake, simply because they have their own special value. Some would manage natural environments so they can be used optimally, for recreation now and in the future. Some see natural environments as one kind of place to be developed for the use of humankind. It is no wonder that there is conflict.

There are three main interest groups. *Developers* would alter the land so that it can be used for a profit-making enterprise. The enterprise may be a resort area for recreation, timber harvesting, or mineral extraction. In any case, the developer will make major changes in the resource. At the other end of the spectrum are the *preservers*. Represented by such organizations as the Sierra Club, preservers take the long view and attempt to prevent any action that is damaging or irretrievable. They base their arguments on the uniqueness of environments and the organic nature of the ecosystem in which any intervention impacts all the rest. The third interest group is that of the *recreation users*. They tend to support both conservation of the quality of the resource and access for use. They would limit interventions in some cases and promote development in others. Backpackers, for example, would restrict the entry of motorized vehicles, but still develop trails and campsites by pristine lakes and streams. Downhill skiers support clear-cutting mountainsides for ski runs and building access roads, but want the surrounding mountain vistas preserved from logging. Recreation users support development for their own activity, but may oppose other kinds of interventions.

Coalitions may form between two of the interest groups over particular projects. Snowmobilers may support building logging roads. Those who fish may support building roads and marinas. Preservationists may find common interest with nonextractive recreationists in wilderness expansion. Further, environmental law requires that the social and economic interests of residents of an area be addressed. Developers tend to be well-represented in the legislative and legal forums. Preservationists have many effective organizations. Local residents and dispersed recreation interests, however, may not be organized for effective political action.

Such conflict involves goals as well as uses. What is most important—preservation of the integrity of a resource for all future generations or management to enhance current uses? Which comes first—jobs based on extraction or the ecosystem itself? Do some interventions improve the resource and others degrade it? If so, how can we measure future consequences? Are highways, with all of their related facilities, a threat to the land and water or the primary way by which most people enjoy the outdoors? Is the noise of Grand

Canyon overflights an intrusion on the experience with nature or the only way that many will ever see the unique scenic wonder?

The land and water are used in many ways. One problem is that we tend to focus on direct human use. People enter the forest to cut trees, mine minerals, hike, camp, hunt, fish, take pictures, ride trail or mountain bikes or horses, explore for rocks, study flora and fauna, and combine different activities. We live on the land, cultivate it, exploit it, study it, appreciate it, and manage it. Some uses are easily combined and others conflict. Some are temporary and others create lasting impacts.

There are two main forms of management for natural resources. When the resource is in private ownership, there are laws and regulations that are designed to prevent widespread and permanent destruction. Such laws are limited in both scope and effectiveness. When the resource is in public ownership, the managing agencies have more control. Their power, however, is still limited by law and by previous uses. There are, for example, old mining claims in designated wilderness and developed in-holdings of resorts and residences in national forests. Further, development nearby may impact the resource of even the most treasured national park or monument.

Nevertheless, land and water planning is necessary for both preservation and use. The federal government uses a framework of the Resource Opportunity Spectrum to designate areas as primitive or open to limited or full development. The aim is to balance opportunities with the nature of the resources. The assumption is that there are places most suitable for major resorts and others so fragile that they can sustain only the most limited use. Of course, the conflict is most acute when attractiveness, access, and fragility are found in the same place.

Any planning begins with a thorough understanding of the ecology of the resource-of just how terrain, water and drainage, tree and plant growth, animal and bird life, soil composition, and all other elements of the natural ecosystem are interrelated and mutually supportive. Any change or intervention is calculated for its initial and cumulative effects. Then there are also impacts on the human communities that are dependent on the resource. Integrated and comprehensive planning is not only complex, but may involve conflicting interests and outcomes. The aim is not to control human freedom, but to maximize freedom and opportunity for the long term. The conflict arises when purposive interveners-human beings-have interests that foreclose the desired actions of others. Planning, then, becomes a political activity that recognizes scarcity, conflict, and the natural ecological balance.

### **Debate: Outdoor Recreation Is Antienvironmental**

#### ***Yes***

- Some recreation is appreciation rather than exploitation. So much recreation, however, requires altering the environment that, on balance, recreation is destructive of natural environments. Ski runs strip mountainsides, pollute streams, and require roads, airports, and other massive development. Power boats pollute water. Visitors litter everywhere. Even appreciation can turn a valley floor into virtual concrete.

- Developing recreation technologies destroy and pollute nature. Snowmobiles and off-road vehicles tear up the terrain and invade protected areas. Helicopters invade the formerly secluded mountaintops and backcountry terrain to bring sightseers and skiers. Commercial recreation providers constantly find new ways to invade natural areas with their technologies.

- Even public land is developed with long-term leases on prime locations: marinas, ski and fishing resorts, bike and horse rentals, and concessions at viewpoints. Business investment requires long-term commitments on the part of public managers. Development, once installed, can never be restored.

- The purpose of recreation investment is to maximize profits. That means using the resource to attract the largest sustainable number of users at the maximum market price. The natural resource, then, becomes a means to a greater end. It is not surprising that recreation interests increasingly form coalitions with those who have other commercial purposes for public land and water against conservation restrictions. The value order becomes use first and conservation second.

- Recreation is invasive, even when regulated. Even small groups in the wilderness leave their signs of invasion. Wildlife habitats are disrupted even by photographers. Fires may get out of control. Rescue operations are massive and mechanized. Recovery in some especially fragile areas is slow. Tire tracks in the desert may last a century.

- Even "leave no trace" users leave some impacts, especially when employing the latest backpacking gear and organized by commercial "experience-providing" businesses that return to the same trails and sites over and over.

- Management becomes more political than scientific. Those with the most influence, however purchased, in legislative and administrative bodies tend to get their way. Where is the old-growth forest, the unpolluted stream, or the undeveloped beach? The assumption in the United States that there is always more land is no longer tenable. Conservation requires saying "no" to some recreation.

### *No*

- Those who know and use natural resources for recreation are often the strongest supporters of preservation. Environmental organizations have hikers, campers, and other appreciative recreationists as a major source of membership and funding. Recreational use helps build support for conservation of wildlands.

- Recreation can be located in places where the activity is appropriate to the resource. Such location is a matter of planning and management that takes the environment into account. Unique environments can be protected. Cars can be banned from the Yosemite valley and the Grand Canyon rim. Development can be placed at a safe distance from water. It is not recreation but bad planning that is poorly enforced that is the problem.

- There are millions of acres of land available. There is space for a variety of recreational uses and for preservation.

- Many recreation uses are educational. For example, family camping and hiking will help children become adults who care about the natural environment and may be willing to support political action.
- Recreation provides a variety of ways to experience natural environments. There is at least some appreciation even in intensive uses such as skiing or extractive uses such as hunting and fishing.
- Land and water use can be regulated through licensing and access restrictions. It is better to regulate than to close off so many resources that many will break the law and use the resources in destructive ways. Regulated use also permits education for conservation.
- Recreation is often the best alternative to other activity such as tree-cutting, mining, grazing, and other extraction. Recreation also provides an alternative economic basis for communities being turned away from extraction.
- Intelligent recreation planning will not destroy the resource that attracts business. Major investments have a time frame for recovery and profit that support unpolluted water and attractive scenery.

### **The Integrity of Nature**

A total focus on recreation in natural settings may obscure an adequate view of nature itself. The perspective may always be on what is best for humankind rather than for the total natural environment. Humans are, after all, a part of nature. In the long term, humans, too, may be an endangered species if there is too much lost of their natural environment.

For example, natural environments may be approached in terms of "carrying capacity." Carrying capacity, however difficult to measure, is the ability of an ecosystem to accommodate use without being irreparably damaged or destroyed. Some sites are quite resilient. Others are vulnerable to damage by even minor human intervention. The assessment, however, is always made from the perspective of human use. How much use can the ecosystem absorb? How fragile is the resource and how much can we do to it?

An alternative perspective is that the natural resource has its own value apart from human use. Nature is not just a resource at all. Rather, nature is the total, incredibly complex and interrelated system of which we are a part. Humans are not "in charge." Rather, nature is the greater whole. Further, any destruction within that system has wide and often immeasurable effects. We are never sure just what is "downstream" from our interventions and actions.

There may even be a kind of religious or spiritual quality to this perspective. It is that nature has its own integrity, its own wholeness. The natural environment is not just a lot of places to be used or not used according to some hierarchy of human ends. Rather, nature is the context of all life, all species, and all forms. It is, in that sense, the wholeness of life. As such, it has a final rather than an instrumental value. Humans, then, are just one kind of life, even if uniquely wonderful and dangerous. John Muir and Aldo Leopold are only two of the classic writers who have developed such an approach<sup>2</sup>.

This perspective leads to a different approach to the natural environment. Of course, there are things there to be used, especially when they are abundant and renewable. Nature

is violent and selective as well as beautiful and beneficent. There is always death and destruction as well as life and health. Nonetheless, the fundamental human approach to nature may be appreciation, immersion, and even reverence. On a particular occasion, the natural environment may be an escape from the artificial and the stress of what has been built to be used. There may be a reunion with life's sources and meanings. Nature is not just one more playground; it is special and profound.

This perspective raises the question of goals. In conflicts between use and preservation, is there an issue greater than that of optimal use over a long time frame? Is there an ethic of preservation and conservation for its own sake? Recognizing the symbolic meaning and the fragility as well as the resilience of nature, we may accept the "existence value" of the natural environment. Perhaps we may someday find uses for natural processes and substances now unknown. Perhaps we may recognize that immersion in nature is something that is more than recreation; it is a basic human need. In any case, preservation is more than an assessment of alternative uses. Nature is the system of life itself with its own fundamental value. It is to be protected for its own sake as well as for ours. This understanding, then, leads to an ethic of relationships and wholeness rather than a calculation of costs and benefits.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are there some natural environments that should be largely closed to human entry? If so, why, and what are they?
2. Do you agree that "space is freedom"? Why or why not?
3. Does planning always lead to control and limits on freedom? Or may planning sometimes be necessary to preserve opportunity? Give examples either way.
4. Are humans a part of nature or the rulers of nature? What are the implications of your position?
5. What is special about natural resource-based recreation?
6. What is the best way to prevent crowding-raising prices, rationing, use restrictions, or just letting dissatisfaction drive some people away?
7. Does government have the right to limit how people use their own land? Why or why not?
8. Is there an inevitable conflict between the profit motive and environmental preservation?

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2. Nash, Rodney. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967.