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SERIOUS LEISURE

A Conceptual Statement

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Many social scientists believe the future will offer significantly fewer opportunities for most adults to gain and maintain a job in the way they are used to doing today. A smaller number of jobs and a substantially reduced number of work hours are in store for many employees in the postindustrial society. Whether or not their jobs ever provided such things, they will increasingly be searching the world of leisure for ways to express their abilities, fulfill their potential, and identify themselves as unique human beings. Serious leisure is a main route open to people with these goals. Its three types—amateurism, hobbyist pursuits, and career volunteering—are defined, described, and interrelated. They are contrasted throughout with unserious or casual leisure, on the one hand, and work, on the other. The intermediate position of serious leisure between these two extremes relegates its current participants to the status of marginal men and women of leisure.

In an age where quests for spectator and sensual diversion dominate the world of leisure, the phrase “serious leisure” may have a rather curious ring. At least historically, such wording is oddly contradictory, for seriousness has commonly been associated only with work, while leisure has been seen as the happy, carefree refuge from our earnest pursuit of money and social standing the paying job supposedly provides. But this view now appears to be losing ground. Current values and behavior patterns in work and leisure hint at the presence of a serious orientation toward leisure among a significant proportion (albeit still a minority) of the population in today’s postindustrial society, and at the likelihood that this proportion will continue to grow

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for some time. Confirmation of this trend comes from several sources.

A number of writers, among them Kreps and Spengler (1973: 89-90), Bryan (1973: 8-9), and Jenkins and Sherman (1979), envision a major reduction in the future in the amount of time the typical worker puts in on the job. This reduction is partly accounted for by a likely decline in the number of jobs available at all levels of skill and training. Jenkins and Sherman (1979: 123), for instance, forecast a 23.2% decline in Britain by the year 2003. As significant is their (1979: 163-164) observation that tomorrow's work week will be shorter, leaving us with more leisure time on our hands than previously and with the problem of how to use it effectively:

We only get a significant block of leisure on retirement, and then we are too old to enjoy many of the facilities that are available for the younger elements of society. This is surely absurd. What it means is that we are working to continue working, not to enjoy the fruits of the work-money and what it can buy. Not all leisure activities have a price, however, and we deprive ourselves even of these by our insistence on working from 16 or 18 or 21 up to 60 or 65 in one continuous, hard stretch. . . . Leisure is not only rest or hedonistic enjoyment. Leisure activities can be constructive and rewarding for both the person and society in general, and whether this is in the nature of gardening or undertaking voluntary work amongst the old or handicapped young or even making one's expertise available to another set of people, the principle remains the same.

They go on to recommend four-day work weeks, three-week work months, extra vacation periods, sabbatical leaves, and job-sharing as possible ways of optimizing our work and leisure in our own interest. Lefkowitz's (1979) interviews with a sample of Americans indicate that some of them are already informally expanding their leisure involvements by voluntarily accepting early retirement or unemployment.

Lefkowitz's (1979) findings signal a change in attitude toward gainful employment. His interviewees want to do things that fulfill their human potential, that develop them as persons.

Increasingly, they are searching for this opportunity in their leisure. Only one in five of this "New Breed," as Yankelovich (1979: 11-13) refers to them, said that their work means more to them than their leisure. Bosserman and Gagan (1972: 113-114) and Best (1973) are among the writers to point out that leisure in postindustrial society is no longer seen as chiefly a means of recuperating from the travail of the job. Like Lefkowitz's and Yankelovich's respondents, they now see leisure as offering a prime opportunity for personal expression, self-identity enhancement, and self-fulfillment. Seltzer and Wilson (1980) found that males and people with incomes above the median used more of their nonwork time for self-development than did those outside these categories.

The proposition to emerge from these impressionistic and descriptive studies is that, more and more, people work primarily because they need the money to sustain their leisure interests, interests that consume a growing proportion of their waking hours. As Aristotle put it, "The end of labor is to gain leisure." A recent newspaper article describes this orientation among three men who have chosen a career in secretarial work. They argue that it has clear-cut hours of employment, which frees two of them to write poetry and the third to take university courses (Brewer, 1979).

If leisure is to become, for many, an improvement over work as a way of finding personal fulfillment, identity enhancement, self-expression, and the like, then people must be careful to adopt those forms returning the greatest payoff. The theme here is that we reach this goal through engaging in serious rather than casual or unserious leisure. My aim is to define, describe, and interrelate three types of this leisure: amateurism, hobbyist pursuits, and career volunteering. They contrast with a bewildering array of unserious forms, such as sitting at a football game, riding a roller coaster, taking an afternoon nap, watching television, observing a fireworks display, going on a picnic, and so on.

The theme just mentioned is in no way a denial of the fact that a small segment of the population will always find their work

and leisure merging. For them, the first is as fulfilling and exciting as any leisure activity can ever be (Dunnette et al., 1973). Nevertheless, most people in the future are apt to shift their "central life interest" (Dubin, 1979) to some leisure involvement.

Lest my emphasis on work versus nonwork circumscribe attention, it should be noted that this treatment of serious leisure types may also be applied to those who have no job and perhaps even no intention of seeking one (such as the aging, the willfully unemployed, the occupationally disabled). It depends on how they define leisure. Some may view amateur or volunteer pursuits as something other than leisure, as either work or some special category. For instance, nearly 13% of the aging women sampled by Roadburg (1980) define volunteering as work, while another 4% define it as leisure. It is seen as leisure most frequently by those who hold paying jobs.

THE NATURE OF SERIOUS LEISURE

That the three types of serious leisure—amateurism, hobbyist pursuits, and volunteering—are not work for most of those who engage in them is patent. That they are leisure is possibly less so. Thus, I begin by comparing them with the seven "essential elements of leisure" set out by Kaplan (1960: 22-25):

(a) an antithesis to "work" as an economic function; (b) a pleasant expectation and recollection; (c) a minimum of involuntary social-role obligations; (d) a psychological perception of freedom; (e) a close relation to values of the culture; (f) an inclusion of an entire range from inconsequence and insignificance to weightiness and importance; and (g) often, but not necessarily, an activity characterized by the element of play.

Kaplan's conception of leisure is congruent with the subjective one guiding this analysis, namely, leisure is activity defined as such by those engaging in it.

Although amateurs and volunteers are sometimes paid for their efforts or expenses or both (see Stebbins, 1979: 206-207;

1981a; Carter, 1975: 92-95), these types of leisure hardly constitute a main source of income. It is characteristic of serious leisure that its practitioners are not dependent on whatever remuneration they derive from it. Moreover, while amateurs, hobbyists, and volunteers frequently incur obligations, and important ones at that, they are freer than breadwinners to renounce their leisure altogether (when particular obligations are not pressing for immediate fulfillment). Nonetheless, serious leisure enthusiasts are usually more obliged to engage in their pursuits than are their unserious counterparts. But like those counterparts, their broad impression of their involvement here is a pleasant one. For the amateurs and the volunteers, and for a small number of hobbyists, this positive view rests on the contribution the activity makes to the individual's well-being and to the life of the community. It follows that the element of play is uncommon in serious leisure.

At this time, it is neither possible nor desirable, given the lack of data on the subject, to offer a crisp definition of serious leisure.¹ That must come later, after systematic research has been conducted on at least some of its many forms. Yet, such research can only take place if we have some idea of what we wish to study and why. The aim here is to point the way to the study of serious leisure by conceptualizing it and its three types to the degree of clarity required for them to serve as *analytic* and *sensitizing* concepts (Blumer, 1969: 147-149; Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 38-39).

During the current exploratory stage of research on serious leisure, seriousness is most effectively examined as a dichotomous quality, with casual or unserious leisure as its opposite. Even today, nonetheless, there is evidence among amateurs, for instance (Stebbins, 1979: 35-37), to suggest that seriousness and casualness, as personal approaches to leisure, are merely the poles of a complicated dimension along which individuals may be ranked by their degrees of involvement in a particular activity. Hence, a more sophisticated, research-informed construct will likely abandon eventually this primitive categorical terminology for terminology conveying continuousness.

When research concepts are "analytic," they are "sufficiently generalized to designate characteristics of concrete entities, not the entities themselves" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 38). Six distinct qualities give the concept of serious leisure this important breadth of scope.

One quality of serious leisure distinguishing it from unserious forms is the occasional need to *persevere* at it. Despite participants' generally pleasant memory of such activity, there are moments when they suffer stage fright (Stebbins, 1981b), embarrassment (Floro, 1978: 198), freezing cold (Stebbins, 1981c), anxiety (Dannefer, 1980: 396), fatigue and injury (Thompson et al., 1979; Hershkowitz, 1972), and other strains. Still, it is clear that the positive feelings about the activity come, to some extent, from sticking with it through thick and thin, through conquering adversity.

Another quality of serious leisure separating it from other types of leisure is the tendency for amateurs, hobbyists, and volunteers to have *careers* in their endeavors. These endeavors are enduring pursuits with their own histories of turning points, stages of achievement or involvement, and background contingencies. They are anything but evanescent occurrences devoid of social or psychological continuity. The volunteer, for instance, might return several days each week for many years to counsel delinquent girls; the amateur might paint and sell a dozen canvases in the span of a decade; the hobbyist runner (Nash, 1979: 213-215) might recognize his progressive improvement in conditioning as he trains for an upcoming race.

Careers in serious leisure frequently rest on a third quality, namely, significant personal *effort* based on special *knowledge*, *training*, or *skill*, and sometimes all three. As subsequent sections of this analysis demonstrate, such characteristics as manual dexterity, scientific knowledge, verbal skills, long experience in a role, showmanship, athletic prowess, and, above all, persistent individual effort, differentiate amateurs and hobbyists from dabblers and the public, and volunteers from trainees and clients.

Fourth, research (Stebbins, 1979, 1981a, 1981c) has shown eight *durable benefits* (Stebbins, 1980) found by amateurs in

their various pursuits: self-actualization, self-enrichment, recreation or renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, self-expression, social interaction and belongingness, and lasting physical products of the activity. A ninth benefit—self-gratification or pure fun—which is considerably more evanescent than the preceding eight, is the only one that is also characteristic of unserious leisure. Self-gratification and, to a lesser extent, social interaction are usually the sole benefits accruing to those who partake of the latter type of pastime. There is reason to believe that systematic study of samples of hobbyists and volunteers would result in similar listings of benefits or rewards, with lasting physical products being the least prevalent among the volunteers (see Altheide and Pfuhl, 1980; Houston, 1968: 56-58; Irwin, 1973; Neulinger, 1974: 62).

A fifth quality differentiating serious and unserious leisure is the *unique ethos* that grows up around each instance of the former. Because of the previously mentioned qualities, amateurs, hobbyists, and volunteers tend to develop subcultures composed of special beliefs, values, moral principles, norms, and performance standards. Put otherwise, serious leisure participants carry on their interests within their own social worlds, which have been described as

amorphous, diffuse constellations of actors, organizations, events, and practices which have coalesced into spheres of interest and involvement for participants [and in which] it is likely that a powerful centralized authority structure does not exist [Unruh, 1980: 277].

Much of popular or unserious leisure cannot be conceived of in these terms.

The sixth quality turns on the preceding five: Participants in serious leisure tend to *identify* strongly with their chosen pursuits. They are inclined to speak proudly, excitedly, and frequently about them to other people, and to present themselves in terms of them when conversing with new acquaintances. Research on amateurs indicates they realize they are sometimes

too enthusiastic about their avocations when discussing them with others (Stebbins, 1979). By contrast, unserious leisure, though hardly humiliating or despicable, is nonetheless too fleeting, mundane, and commonplace for most people to find a distinctive identity in it.

It should be clear from the contents of this section that the senses to be stressed of the adjective "serious" are earnestness, sincerity, importance, and carefulness, rather than gravity, solemnity, joylessness, distress, and anxiety. Though items in the second list occasionally describe serious leisure events, they are not characteristic of them, and they fail to nullify or, in many cases, even dilute the overall pleasure participants gain from them.

The foregoing discussion also indicates that serious leisure is as often described and analyzed in terms appropriate to the world of work as it is in those appropriate to the world of leisure. Hobbyists and volunteers, it seems, join the amateurs in the ranks of the marginal men and women of leisure (see Stebbins, 1979: 40-43).

AMATEURISM

Modern amateurs (not the nineteenth-century types) in art, science, sport, and entertainment pursue an activity chosen because of its strong appeal. The durable benefits of this type of leisure, however, spring from the refusal to remain a player, dabbler, or novice at it. Rather, the activity is transformed into an avocation in which the participant is motivated by seriousness and commitment, as these are expressed both in regimentation (such as practice or rehearsals) and in systematization (such as schedules or organization).

In distinguishing amateurs from other types of serious leisure participants, one definition is particularly appropriate.² It presents amateurs as part of a professional-amateur-public (P-A-P) system of functionally interdependent relationships, an institutional location that is both cause and effect of their serious, committed orientation toward the activity in question. It is

evident that amateurs are linked to professionals or publics or both in at least seven ways, which, to avoid needless repetition, are only sketchily summarized here (for more detail, see Stebbins, 1977: 585-588).

- (1) Amateurs serve publics, as professionals do, and at times the same ones. Here they are guided by standards of excellence set and communicated by the professionals.
- (2) A monetary and organizational relationship exists between amateurs and professionals, such as when professionals train, advise, organize, and even perform with amateurs, and when amateurs come to constitute a special, knowledgeable part of the professionals' public.
- (3) Intellectual ties bind these two groups, which spring primarily from the amateurs who, having more time for such things, can maintain a broader and simultaneously less specialized knowledge of the field than can most professionals.
- (4) Amateurs restrain professionals from overemphasizing technique and from stressing superficialities in lieu of profound work or products.
- (5) Amateurs insist on the retention of excellence.
- (6) Amateurs often stimulate professionals to give their publics the best they can.
- (7) Professionals who form part of a P-A-P system inevitably start in the amateur ranks (as pure amateurs or preprofessional amateurs); unless they abandon their field altogether or die in it, they also return to those ranks at a later stage in their career.

These links between amateurs and professionals constitute the most important and distinctive criteria for differentiating amateurs from hobbyists and volunteers. The latter two types have no such ties with this part of the occupational world. Hence they experience few, if any, of the consequences of those ties, whether they be advantageous or disadvantageous.

HOBBYIST PURSUITS

Both hobbyists and amateurs are practitioners with definite and lasting purposes. Hobbyists are serious about and committed

to their endeavors, even though they frequently feel no necessity or obligation to engage in them. In other words, they are not dabblers or people aimlessly doing something as a temporary diversion. A hobby is a specialized pursuit beyond one's occupation, a pursuit one finds particularly interesting and enjoys doing because of its durable benefits.

A crucial difference between hobbyists and amateurs is that the first are external to any complete P-A-P system. Though uncommon, hobbyists may have a commercial public, for example, the part-time toy maker who sells to a local market, but they lack professional counterparts. A commercial equivalent may also exist, as in the case of hobbyist flytiers versus fishing-equipment manufacturers. But the latter differ significantly from members of a "profession" as this term is conventionally defined and used in occupational sociology. Indeed, hobbyists are likely to be enamored of pursuits bearing little or no resemblance to ordinary work roles.

Any monetary interests in a hobby are secondary when compared with its other durable benefits. The studies of hobbyists cited at various points in this article support this proposition, in the sense that remuneration is never mentioned as a reason for engaging in hobbies. To the extent that hobbies are like amateur pursuits, evidence of the low priority of remuneration as a durable benefit among the latter (see Stebbins, 1979: 66, 140-141, 208-210; 1981a: Chapter 6) constitutes additional indirect support. In other words, neither hobbies nor amateur pursuits are entered primarily as a form of moonlighting to supplement the practitioner's main income. They are not "second jobs." There is a devotion to these forms of serious leisure that suggests they would be practiced regardless of the financial gain or loss that adheres to them. If a substantial amount of money is made in them, that is but one reward of many and, it appears from the evidence at hand, one of the least significant. Many "sideline" businesses, including some hobby farms, are thus excluded from consideration as true hobbies.

Hobbyists fall into four categories: *collectors* of, for instance, stamps, rare books, butterflies, violins, minerals, or paintings

develop a technical knowledge of the commercial, social, and physical circumstances in which their fancied items are acquired.³ They also develop a sophisticated appreciation of those items, along with a broad understanding of their historical and contemporary production and use. This knowledge, appreciation, and understanding is illustrated in Dannefer's (1980) ethnography of the social world of the old-car collector. Elkoﬀ (1970) dwells on the technical knowledge art collectors need when they try to locate original paintings with a good probability of high future value.

Hobbyist collectors are distinguishable from commercial dealers. Dealers acquire their stock in order to profit from and hence make a living by subsequent sales—a wholly different motive from the motive driving hobbyist collectors. The latter may make money by selling a violin or painting for one more valuable, but they are interested in gaining a prestige item for personal and social reasons, or possibly for hedging inflation, rather than in earning a livelihood.

The casual collecting of such things as matchbooks, beer bottles, or travel pennants is, at best, a marginal instance of "hobbyism" (to coin a new word). Here, there is no equivalent complex of commercial, social, and physical circumstances to learn about; no substantial aesthetic or technical appreciation possible; no comparable level of understanding of their production and use to be developed. Casual collecting is most accurately classified as part of unserious leisure, as a pastime.

Makers and tinkers comprise the second group of hobbyists. This is the conceptual home of such enthusiasts as inventors, furniture and toy makers, flytiers, automobile repairers, boat builders, seamstresses, knitters and weavers, lapidary workers, home remodelers (where this is a recurrent activity), and handi-crafters (where no professional counterpart exists). The do-it-yourself drudge who paints the exterior of his house to avoid the expense of a full-time tradesperson is no example of the hobbyist home remodeler. Nor can we regard the branches of commercial automobile repair, clothing manufacture, and pottery-making as examples of tinkers or makers.

The third kind of hobbyist is the *activity participant*. Such people steadfastly pursue a form of leisure for the development and expression of skills and knowledge and for the personal enrichment it offers. Often the activity poses a challenge to be met, albeit a noncompetitive one. When carried out continually and purposely for these reasons, the following are among the things activity participants do: bodybuilding, backpacking, hang-gliding, cross-country skiing, surfing, bird watching, tourism, fishing and hunting, and serious reading of a genre of literature (such as science, belles lettres, history).

When their pursuits are competitive, hobbyists can be classified in a fourth way, as *players* of sports or games. Unlike those in the preceding category, players are related to each other by a set of rules structuring their actions while they are engaged in the contest. These activities, which lack a professional counterpart, include canoe racing, cross-country running, darts, archery, shuffleboard, volleyball, horseshoes, softball, and rock climbing.⁴ Consistent with the definition of "hobbyist," participation is continual and systematic. The aim is to acquire and maintain the knowledge and skills enabling the individual to experience uncommon rewards from the endeavor. This orientation, whatever the type of serious leisure, can have unwanted consequences, as the following observations on dedicated runners suggest:

Direct conflict between the runner and his or her spouse or partner over such issues as neglect, loss of shared interests, friends, fatigue, and neglect of work was found to be consistently related to commitment to running. Higher levels of time and intensity commitment, subcultural involvement, and cognitive identification are associated with more intense complaints of the runner by his or her partner [Robbins and Joseph, 1980: 97-98].

Such sports as baseball, hockey, bridge, and tennis are more accurately placed under the heading of amateurism, owing to their location in a P-A-P system. Other sports, like racketball and possibly auto racing, being in the process of professionalizing, are thus difficult to classify at present.

Some hobbyists fit more than one category, such as the builders of motorized model airplanes who ultimately fly their

constructions in a nearby field. Classification of individual hobbyists also depends partly on the contexts in which they pursue their activities. Swimmer number one is a player because he competes in swimming meets. Swimmer number two is an activity participant because she swims strictly for the pleasure of the development and maintenance of her skill and for the exercise it provides.

Historically, certain hobbies in the arts, science, sport, and entertainment fields have evolved over the years into full-time livelihoods for some of their enthusiasts and ultimately into professions. As professionalization occurred, those who retained their serious, albeit part-time, commitment to the activity were gradually transformed into amateurs. Before this, in the early days of the activity, all participants were the so-called gentlemen amateurs, usually independently wealthy individuals who had time to devote to leisure interests. In other words, the emerging professionalism was paralleled by an emerging amateurism. Through the P-A-P system that was taking shape, the amateurs in it learned what full-time work at the erstwhile hobby could produce, which, depending on the area, included greater rates of productivity, increased complexity of knowledge and instrumentation, new standards of performance excellence, expanded and formalized training requirements, and so on. This eventually reshaped the part-time pursuit of the activity, in the sense that, increasingly, it was modeled after its new professional counterpart. Historical research by Ainley (1980) and Lankford (1981a, 1981b) describe this process as it unfolded in ornithology and astronomy, respectively.⁵

CAREER VOLUNTEERING

Van Til (1979: 11) states the essential differences between voluntary action and its subcategory of interest to us, namely, volunteering:

Voluntary action is uncoerced, and not primarily aimed toward financial gain; it may be individual or group action. *Volunteering*

is that form of voluntary action involving helping activities deemed beneficial.

Bosserman and Gagan (1972: 115) and Smith (1975: 248) hold that, at the individual level, all leisure is voluntary action. In fact, such action may even be found in nonleisure settings. Voluntary action (and therefore volunteering) is undertaken for reasons other than economic benefit, self-preservation, physical coercion, physiological need, or psychic or social compulsion. Neulinger (1981: 19) reviews the conceptualizations of leisure as a social instrument in the community, as a means of serving others.

The conceptual framework of serious leisure encompasses three of the five categories of volunteering identified by Carter (1975: 106). Volunteers in *management and board work* engage in fund-raising, committee work, and board activities. *Service* volunteers perform such tasks as information-giving, volunteer driving, homemaking for others, friendly visiting, case aide work, tutoring, baby-sitting, youth work, and clerical functions. In the *political and civic* sphere, volunteers get involved in citizens' movements, social advocacy, social action, and political functions.

Because volunteering, when viewed as a type of serious leisure, is a recurrent, skill- and knowledge-based activity in which people can have a career in a special social world, the other two categories mentioned by Carter—*financial help* and *gifts of self*—are excluded from the present discussion.⁶ Donations of clothing and money may be recurrent, but they hardly meet the other criteria of volunteering as serious leisure. Gifts of furniture, blood, organs, tissues, eyes, and so forth are normally one-shot contributions and, except for furniture, pleasant only in the altruistic feelings generated from one's magnanimity.

Two aspects of the volunteering role distinguish its incumbents from the first two types of serious leisure participants. One of these is *altruism*. Though it is now established that volunteers are usually driven by both altruistic and self-interested motives (National Advisory Council on Voluntary Action, 1978: 11; Carter, 1975: 83), the former influences volunteers far more than it influences amateurs or hobbyists.

The second aspect is the *delegated tasks* volunteers perform, tasks offered to them by their superiors who are employed in the organization in which the volunteers serve.⁷ That is, these tasks are ones the professional or managerial staff of the organization believe volunteers can do, given adequate training and experience, and which staff care not to do themselves (see Lauffer and Gorodezky, 1977: 9). This turns volunteers into "outsiders" in work organizations or agencies otherwise composed of insiders (Floro, 1978: 198). Indeed, they may even be threatening to some of the insiders (Deegan and Nutt, 1975: 351). It is for these reasons that volunteers usually require sponsors (Floro, 1978: 197), an arrangement unheard of in the individualized forms of amateurism and hobbyism. In the collective forms, tryouts provide a sort of immediate proof of a performer's or athlete's excellence, and obviate any need for a sponsor. All this means that volunteers are neither facsimilies of professionals, as amateurs are, nor bureaucratized workers. Rather, they are a special class of helper in someone else's occupational world (Floro, 1978: 194).⁸

These two aspects enable volunteers, as they pursue their serious leisure, to contribute to society in a unique way. This they do by helping. It contrasts with the contributions of amateurs and hobbyists, whose commercial, scientific, sport, artistic, and entertainment activities are fundamentally *cultural*. While they do help on occasion, as in the case of the avocational scientists who collect data for professional analysis, helping is only a minor goal; it is but a secondary consequence of their self-interested search for leisure with durable benefit. There may be considerable self-sacrifice, as already mentioned, but this is done primarily for personal reasons and only secondarily for altruistic ones.

In their pursuit of serious leisure, volunteers reverse these values. They gain durable personal benefits from these endeavors, but helping remains their chief aim. Amateurs and hobbyists struggle through the difficult requirements of their leisure because they are expected to be devotees and because hard work engenders feelings of accomplishment. When volunteers labor,

TABLE 1
Distinctive Attributes of the Types of Serious Leisure

Differentiating principle	Amateurism	Hobbyism	Volunteering
Motivation	1) Self-interest 2) Public interest 3) Altruism 4) Pecuniary interest	1) Self-interest 2) Public interest 3) Pecuniary interest	1) Altruism 2) Self-interest
Institutional role	1) Near professional	1) Nonwork	1) Delegated work
Contribution	1) Satisfaction 2) Cultural 3) Helping 4) Commercial	1) Satisfaction 2) Cultural 3) Commercial	1) Helping 2) Satisfaction

they do so with the conviction that they are needed and that to weaken in the face of adversity is to let down others, disappoint them, or leave serious personal or social problems unresolved.

Nevertheless, volunteers and amateurs do make one similar contribution; in their own ways they relate the occupation or organization with which they are associated to its clients. Lauffer and Gorodezky (1977: 10) have noted, for example, that the "volunteers sometimes speak the clients' language more directly than paid staff." In science, amateurs have been recognized for their public relations efforts, such as working to educate the citizenry in the fundamentals of the discipline and lobbying government for legislation favorable to it (see Mayfield, 1979: 169; Stebbins, 1982).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Table 1 summarizes the conceptual discussion of the previous three sections. The number preceding each attribute signifies its rank order in terms of the degree of significance ascribed to it

by the typical participant. The higher the number, the less significant the attribute. Indeed, depending on the type of serious leisure under consideration, the second, third, and fourth attributes apply only to a minority of individual participants. This ranking is based on current knowledge about the three types. Since research is badly needed here, new data could change this pattern, perhaps dramatically.

But the case for consideration of serious leisure does not end with a call to social scientists to give it more research attention. For at least some people, it offers an attractive alternative to the typical job, in an age when that job is consuming less and less of our time while continuing to function as the main source of personal income with which we sustain life and leisure. Yet, people must either discover for themselves or be shown that

leisure is not always a good time. Freedom to choose never guarantees happiness. The growth of leisure does not automatically enhance the quality of life, it merely bestows the opportunity, and thereby underlines the urgency of enquiring how individuals can be assisted to derive maximum benefit from their scope for choice, and why leisure sometimes fails to deliver the promised fulfilment [Roberts, 1981: 61].

The suggestion I believe to be implicit in Roberts's statement is that a steady diet of casual, unserious leisure in the sizable blocks of time left over after a substantially reduced work week, month, or year ultimately tends to cause spiritual dyspepsia. The work one does in the standard work period of the present may be alienating in the most poignant Marxian sense of the word. But replacement by "alienated" or "anomic" leisure (Gunter and Gunter, 1980: 369-372) is no way to improve the quality of life either.

Serious leisure requires, as I have tried to show, the development of skills and knowledge, the accumulation of experience, and the expending of effort. This background has somehow to be acquired. To the extent that an educational system can provide it, our present one will have to undergo some major changes

(Jenkins and Sherman, 1979: 145). It must be reorganized to teach people how to be amateurs, hobbyists, or volunteers, as well how to fill jobs that will be not only different but also less time-consuming than those of today. If we succeed at this—and it is no mean challenge—then many of us are likely to reach the happy state envisaged by Cicero:

If the soul has food for study and learning, nothing is more delightful than an old age of leisure. . . . Leisure consists in all those virtuous activities by which a man grows morally, intellectually, and spiritually. It is that which makes life worth living.

Cicero wrote better than two thousand years ago. Today we need not wait for old age to have such opportunities. Tomorrow the wait will be even shorter.

NOTES

1. Compared with casual leisure, the serious variety has received scant research attention. To the extent that this research bears on the scope of this analysis, much of it is reviewed here. While they have generally shunned serious leisure as a research topic, a few scholars (de Grazia, 1962: 332-336; Glasser, 1970: 190-192; Kaplan, 1975: 80, 183; Kando, 1980: 108) have recognized the distinction between serious and casual leisure (though they use different adjectives). De Grazia, Glasser, and Kaplan lean toward the former as the ideal way for members of the postindustrial society to spend their discretionary time.

2. An extensive discussion of the development of this definition from its common-sense roots, the various facets of the professional-amateur-public (P-A-P) system, and the place of hobbyists within it is available elsewhere (Stebbins, 1977: 585-594).

3. Whether some collectors are hobbyists or amateurs will eventually be decided by research on the professionalism or lack of it among full-time curators of various kinds of collections.

4. Hamilton (1979) describes how rock climbing has moved, in the past two decades, from a practice of overcoming the difficulties of mountain ascent (the challenge of the activity participant) to a highly technical, specialized, and competitive pursuit rightly called a game or sport. A distinctive subculture unites the climbing world.

5. Indeed, historical writings about amateurs, when centered on the preprofessional phase of a field of leisure, are actually about the gentlemen amateurs at that time who, according to the present framework, are more accurately classified as hobbyists. Only in retrospect, by comparing the earlier hobby with its subsequent professional development, can we refer to them today as amateurs.

6. For a discussion of volunteering as a career, see Floro (1978: 197-198).
7. It may happen, especially in social action, advocacy groups, and political groups, that senior volunteers in the organization tell the junior ones what to do.
8. Delegated tasks are different from the tasks carried out by amateurs in such collectivities as theater companies and community orchestras. Amateurs try out for their roles or chairs in these groups, which are reserved for group members, for *insiders*. In other words, there would be no group were it not for the amateurs, while groups using volunteer help could survive and function without it, albeit often less effectively. Moreover, the tasks of such amateurs are usually ones the leader is unable to carry out (for example, no conductor plays all the instruments of the orchestra); hence they are not delegated in the sense used here to describe volunteer tasks.

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