RECONSTRUCTING SCHOLE IN PUBLIC LEISURE SERVICES

by

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(Under the Direction of Douglas Kleiber)

ABSTRACT

American life has become increasingly fragmented and individualistic, characterized by citizens' pursuit of their private conceptions of the good life and facilitated by the liberalism of government as it emphasizes the protection of rights rather than conceptions of a common good. This increasing individualism has also been accompanied by an increasingly anti-intellectual sentiment evidenced by a steadily decreasing literacy rate, fervent political partisanship, and passive media consumption. Aristotle's conception of leisure—what it is, what purpose it serves, how it should be utilized—is introduced as a meaningful guide for contemporary American society to reconstruct a social/intellectual leisure for the 21st century in hopes of counterbalancing the rampant individualism and anti-intellectualism plaguing American society. Local government institutions such as municipal leisure service agencies and libraries are presented as essential tools for the application of this reconstructed view of Aristotelian leisure into community practice, with conversation as the most essential leisure activity. A critical examination of the history of the municipal recreation and leisure services movement in America suggests that a "golden era" (displaying semblances of Aristotelian intellectual and social/political leisure) in the first few decades of the 20th century has been highly romanticized, and instead, was driven primarily by the quest for professionalism through the application of

generic business management principles. Current conceptions and practices of leisure service agencies are critiqued and an alternative conception grounded in Aristotelian leisure—development and exercise of the intellect and broad political participation—is presented for consideration by practitioners in local government. Academic programs providing professional preparation for public leisure service careers are critically examined and a new interdisciplinary institute for leisure education and civic engagement is proposed.

INDEX WORDS: Aristotle; Leisure; Intellectualism; Municipal government; Higher education; Public recreation history

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of individuals and of states is the same, the end of the best man and of the best constitution must also be the same; it is therefore evident that there ought to exist in both of them the excellences of leisure. Aristotle, *Politics*

The field of recreation and leisure studies, both academically and professionally, is still in its youth. Therefore, it lacks the extensive history of its "parent disciplines" (psychology, education, philosophy, sociology, political science, etc.). Because of this lack of maturity, recreation and leisure studies, as a field for academic inquiry, has retrieved and embraced certain elements from its parent disciplines and made them its own. But what, exactly, has recreation and leisure studies embraced as it has evolved?

A perusal of standard introductory recreation and leisure textbooks reveals an overwhelming number of references to, and invocations of, Aristotle. Certainly, Aristotle reserved a prominent place in his philosophical system (particularly his ethical/political writings) for leisure. But while he took great pains, clearly and exhaustively, to define and conceptualize things such as happiness, friendship, and motion, he neglected to offer a clear definition of leisure. This is both a blessing and a curse. As Owen (1981) pointed out, Aristotle's ambiguity about leisure is one reason for its continued relevance to contemporary society resulting in a freedom to interpret leisure in different and interesting ways. However, this ambiguity also results in conflicting and often irreconcilable interpretations made by various scholars, sometimes allowing for misrepresentations of Aristotle (see especially Sylvester, 1987, for a

critique of Neulinger's use of Aristotelian leisure). Such a lack of consensus would normally reflect a healthy and productive academic debate. However, there has been a documented failure on the part of leisure researchers to examine original texts (Hemingway, 1988; Hunnicutt, 1990; Sylvester, 1990) resulting in an over-reliance on secondary literature for information about Aristotelian leisure. As researchers, students, and practitioners become further removed from direct contact with the ideas found in *Politics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, and other writings by Aristotle, the possibility of misrepresentation or outright distortion of the text becomes more prevalent. In a practical, applied field such as leisure studies, these misconceptions can have profound consequences, especially when they exert influence on the philosophical foundations of both leisure studies academic curricula and leisure service agencies. Sylvester (1990) also issues a related warning:

> Contemporary theorists continue to use classical leisure as if Aristotle conceived it with their specific purposes in mind. In most instances, however, their appropriations have been illegitimate, leading to mistakes and misdirections. As a result, validity is corrupted. Placing our understanding of leisure on precarious grounds (p. 292).

The effects of these misinterpretations are further complicated by the social issues that justify the exploration and application of Aristotelian leisure in the first place. Community leisure, or recreation (as it was referred to in the early-to-mid twentieth century America), was organized by community members and their local government officials with the intent of avoiding "the unwise use of leisure" (Kraus, 1984, p. 105) while promoting its wise use. This echoes Aristotle's view of leisure and his famous critique of Sparta that its statesmen failed to teach their citizens how to live a life of leisure with peace (*Pol* $1333^{b}20$). The utilization of leisure in addressing such things as the common good, character development, intellectual and physical health, the establishment of friendship, and other community-minded topics was not

uncommon in the early development of leisure studies and leisure services and in many ways paralleled Aristotelian leisure.

As America moved into the 1960's and the civil rights movement began gaining momentum, the philosophical direction of community recreation and leisure, with its vestigial connection to Aristotle, began to fade. Certainly, recognizing the value of leisure for *all* people was of great import; however, what could have been considered otherwise a great opportunity to maintain some semblance of Aristotelian leisure resulted instead in a gradual movement (by community leisure services) away from civic engagement and intellectual activity and toward an individualized, market-oriented brand of recreation through the end of the century. Thus, we arrive in 21st Century America, rife with societal ills borne of civic disengagement and anti-intellectualism, to gaze curiously at the state of community leisure services (and the academic programs that inform it) and ask ourselves if leisure still possesses the potential that we once thought it had. And if so, could it be a worthwhile endeavor to critically re-examine the classical ideal of leisure to determine if it may yet find meaning and application in a field (and society) that appears to be so desperately at odds with itself?

In this essay, I argue that Aristotelian leisure can find this meaning and application. Such a difficult task requires specific and sequential layers that when considered as a whole, supports the position I am primarily defending: community leisure services critically re-oriented to a classical approach may effectively address the societal ills plaguing American communities. Because the Aristotelian view rests on two fundamental assumptions about human nature—that we are 1) social/political animals that 2) seek knowledge and understanding—it is well suited for combating the individualistic and anti-intellectual tendencies now displayed in contemporary American leisure.

The initial layer thus consists of a re-examination, and re-interpretation, of Aristotle's texts, not only involving leisure but other components of Aristotle's philosophical system that inform leisure. In particular, my analysis focuses on *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. I also incorporate specialized secondary literature directly related to these works. One important question that is asked during this phase of the inquiry is whether leisure, as a necessary condition for a flourishing life, may consist not only of contemplative, isolated, and theoretically-oriented activity, but social, political, and practical activity as well.

The second layer of my analysis entails an exhaustive critique of leisure studies scholarship that utilizes Aristotle's concept of leisure. I group these pieces of research into categories that share similar interpretations. I also identify and critique those pieces of scholarship that served as inspiration for this body of leisure studies scholarship, such as Owen (1981) and Stocks (1936) as well as the classically oriented leisure books *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* by Pieper, and *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* by de Grazia.

Having established the classical conceptual foundations, I construct a third layer consisting of an intellectual history of community leisure services deriving from the initial community and local government efforts to utilize leisure as a social reforming mechanism from the late 19th to the mid 20th century. In particular, I examine *semblances* of Aristotelian or classical leisure. As stated previously, my purpose was to determine if community leisure services (as discussed in the literature) once resembled Aristotelian leisure, and use available historical data to answer this question. In addition, it is important to document the shift from leisure organization and policy that emphasizes the common good to one that emphasizes individual rights. The former advocates autonomy and engages in meaningful social criticism (an essential aspect of intellectual leisure, which I discuss in detail in the fourth chapter of this

essay) while the latter is highly individualized, expert dependent, subjective, and non-reflective. The historical writings of the rise of the recreation profession, even those commissioned by the National Park and Recreation Association, strongly suggest that professionalization, specialization, and a market-oriented approach act in concert to move leisure services away from Aristotelian leisure.

Finally, the fourth layer of the inquiry is an imaginative and forward-looking activity regarding community leisure services and its *potential* to become re-oriented to, and informed by, Aristotelian leisure. In particular, leisure services as a social capital generating agency, as a viable *third place*, as a venue for informal political discourse, and as a space for intellectual exercise are proposed and explored. The idea of transitioning from *recreation* services to *leisure* services, including what distinguishes the two, is a product of this final layer.

Approach to Research

The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse. It consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be.

Aristotle, *Poetics*

As a whole, this research may be viewed as having characteristics and features both political, philosophical, and historical. Rousmaniere (2004) described historical research as possessing two capabilities when she said, "It's important to keep in mind that history ultimately does more than tell a story about the past. History also helps to make meaning about the present" (p. 50). This, in turn may "suggest possible future directions" (Baumgartner, Strong, & Hensley, 2002). This seems to be consistent with the overall purpose of my present inquiry (taking stock of the past to understand the present) as I propose a critical re-construction of classical leisure for contemporary community leisure services. However, the individual layers comprising this research have each utilized their own particular approach.

The first layer, analysis of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, requires the application of hermeneutical inquiry (Sylvester, 1990) as I attempt to interpret what Aristotle meant by leisure through the examination of his written texts. In particular, Aristotle's arguments relevant to leisure will be explicated and critiqued in hopes of presenting the reader with a logically constructed interpretation of his position.

The second layer investigates and critiques the interpretations of Aristotelian leisure by contemporary scholars in the areas of leisure studies, political science, and philosophy. This is an important move given that many leisure researchers' first (and sometimes only) exposure to Aristotelian leisure is often three, four, or five times removed from the original texts. The writings examined in this section will determine how leisure studies as a field, weighs in on the concept of classical leisure.

The third layer, a history of community leisure services, involves the critical examination of historical texts. In addition, the scrutiny of textbooks used by leisure studies (for professional training purposes) that deal directly with community recreation/leisure services provides valuable insight into how community leisure services was perceived by academics and practitioners. What early pioneers identified as the purpose of community leisure services and how it should be practiced, indicates to some extent the characteristics of classical leisure that were to be slowly abandoned. Since I am proposing to examine writings from the agency's origins (late nineteenth century) through the present, I shall be better able to document the changes over time, both significant and subtle, of community leisure services.

The fourth layer, imagining the possibilities of community leisure services, is a conceptual bridge for applying critically re-constructed Aristotelian leisure to contemporary leisure service agencies in the United States. As Aristotle suggested in the *Poetics*, it will require

the work of the historian and the poet. This portion will be driven by ideas and data collected and analyzed from the past and present. In particular, I have identified four potential areas for leisure services to explore: leisure services as a social capital-generating agency, leisure services as a viable *third place*, leisure services as a venue for informal political discourse, and leisure services as an arena for intellectual exercise. In fact, each of these areas involves some overlap with the others (for instance, informal political discourse is also considered intellectual activity), but for purposes of my analysis, I shall treat each individually. These four areas are inspired by the following books: *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam, *The Great Good Place* by Ray Oldenburg, *Avoiding Politics* by Nina Eliasoph, and *Post-Intellectualism and the Decline of Democracy* by Donald Wood. I give a brief treatment of each later in this text.

Problem Statement

For legislators make the citizens good by forming habits in them.
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Although interpretations of Aristotelian leisure have generally focused on the contemplative, theoretical activity of individuals, there is evidence in Aristotle's writings that leisure was understood as involving both practical and political activity within social settings. Furthermore, political activity could be viewed both as an end (*telos*) and as a means (*praxis*), being choice-worthy for its own sake, as well as for the results that are produced from such activity. Hemingway (1988) presents convincing arguments that emphasize the role leisure plays in the citizen's development of civic excellence by focusing on Aristotle's practical philosophy. In *Politics,* Book VII, Aristotle emphasizes the necessity of leisure for both the development of excellence and political activity. These require social interaction, and since leisure is identified

by Aristotle as being a necessary condition for happiness, leisure activities of a social nature are needed for individuals to achieve happiness. I shall go into greater detail on these matters later. However, the main point here is that the Aristotelian concept of leisure did, indeed, contain a social element that required individual citizens to engage one another with good *habits*, both intellectual and moral, being the result. And these leisure activities were worthy of engagement for their own sakes and for the positive results (becoming courageous, developing temperance, shaping the political process, etc) that often followed. Thus, classical leisure, in part, consisted of intellectual and moral civic engagement done for its own sake as well as for the sake of other things. And those who governed were expected to promote such activity, both for the sake of the individual and for the community since the *telos* of the man and the state are the same. So if this preliminary sketch reveals the nature of classical leisure, what does its contemporary American counterpart look like?

Leisure, as it is understood and practiced in contemporary American society, is individual-focused, expert dependent, and largely emotionally-rather than morally-defined. In practice, leisure programs are traditionally oriented to achieve measurable, individual outcomes within a structured and professional environment with an emphasis on having fun. This is evidenced by almost any leisure programming textbook (see especially Henderson & Bialeschki, 2003) as well as the program policy and budget literature for individual leisure service agencies. It is also present in much of the psychology-driven leisure writings that feature *optimal experience* and *flow* and whether individuals are *satisfied* or *constrained* (see, Mannell & Kleiber, 1997; Kleiber, 1999). This deviates from the classical conception in two important ways. First, because leisure has been conceptualized as a state of mind, this subjectivity can result in leisure-without-virtue since it will have unique meaning to each and every individual

and will be unable to consider, much less achieve, a common good. Second, the individual program focus is driven by the demand of the participants, which places government officials in the role of selling preferred experiences rather than promoting and sustaining the habits of civic engagement (see Mannell, 1983). As these experiences are delivered, it may be the case that the government is encouraging an atmosphere of dependency which may become damaging to individuals' potential to be self-directed and autonomous (see, Stormann, 1993).

We have now arrived at the core problem addressed by this inquiry. Primarily, classical leisure was social and intellectual activity engaged in for its own sake (but with ethical and political underpinnings) that gave consideration not only to the individual but to the community. In contrast, modern leisure is mostly regarded as a state of mind that is individual focused, subjectively-defined, and engaged in for the sake of benefits that are largely individualistic. Thus, the problem is how classical leisure can be critically reconstructed in contemporary society so as to become a prospective counteracting force to the societal ills of isolation and anti-intellectualism. It should be noted that Aristotle developed his philosophy as he observed Athens descend from the heights of its Golden Era, documenting many of the same societal ills that we experience today. In his view, these were, in part, a result of the unwise use of leisure. I will now turn to these societal ills.

Study Rationale

For without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods.
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Various bodies of literature, both academic (see the communitarian scholarship of Pedlar, Arai, Stormann, and Glover as well as Hemingway) and popular (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton 1985; Florida, 2003; Putnam, 2000), have suggested that Americans are

increasingly isolating themselves from their fellow citizens, are driven by self-interest, and are engaging in fewer democratic, intellectual, and citizenship-strengthening activities. Furthermore, Americans are severing ties with organizations and networks that promote such activity (see especially Putnam, 2000). Indeed, the venue that traditionally has introduced and nurtured these types of civic activities has been the educational system. However, education has been acquiring a more professional flavor (Bloom, 1987) since the middle of the twentieth century as young people are prepared and trained for the workforce and established workers refresh their understanding and job currency through continuing professional education. Young adults residing in the workforce are trying hard to increase their purchasing power. In fact, Schor (1992) presented convincing evidence that working Americans, both blue and white collar, have trapped themselves on what she refers to as the "work-spend treadmill."

This condition consists of a vicious cycle of work for the sake of more goods that, in turn, require more work. Leisure, if it exists at all, is only important for recuperation and is filled with amusements. Schor even points out the irony that those workers purchasing "leisure equipment" do not have the necessary free time to use it (see also Linder, 1970). In addition, some in the twilight of their careers, when faced with the option of retirement and a significant increase in free time tend to return to the comfort and "busyness" of the work realm, either directly (by returning to their jobs) or indirectly (by seeking activity that closely resembles their old jobs) (See Ekerdt, (1986). The societal description presented here suggests a fragmented and self-absorbed society of individuals who fail to see beyond their personal environments—in other words, an emphasis on the private sphere and a neglect of the public sphere (see Putnam, 2000; Bellah, et al, 1985). Such circumstances may threaten democracy itself.

A particular threat to democracy was raised by a recent New York Times article (Weber, 2004) that shared data from the 2000 U.S. Census documenting a significant decline in the number of books read and plays and concerts attended by American adults, and a general decrease in other intellectual and cultural activities. Similar trends noted earlier led one Ivy League professor of english (Wood, 1996) to conclude that democracy is threatened by this intellectual and cultural deterioration. Wood argues that at the root of this decline is an utter lack of meaningful social criticism on the part of the citizenry, a key component to intellectualism. His position is that democracy is an intellectual idea, one that the United States was founded upon, and that the citizens of such forms of government are for the most part "rationally capable of participatory self-government" (p. 17), but for a variety of reasons are failing to be so in the United States in ever larger numbers.

The late social critic, Neil Postman, also directs our attention to a decline in democracy and citizenship-strengthening activity—particularly that of public political discourse. In *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1985) he suggested that not only has the quantity of public political discourse decreased, but the quality of what remains has been weakened. While Postman does point an accusatory finger at television and other "mind numbing" technological entertainments, the heart of his argument revolves around the very devaluing of quality democratic activity. Individuals are not engaged in dialogue with others due to the demanding and sometimes uncomfortable nature of thoughtful and deliberative discussion. It is much easier to receive passively your view of the world and your place in it from "greater powers" (i.e., mass media) from which it arrives prepackaged. Amusements, often deriving from a variety of technologies, offer us a powerful means of distraction—both from our fellow man as well as from ourselves.

Approaching these societal ills from a more empirical perspective, political scientist Robert Putnam brought considerable attention to the concept of social capital and its general decline since the WWII Generation. According to Putnam (2000) social capital "refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called 'civic virtue'" (p. 19). Putnam implies that the crumbling of social networks and absence of civic engagement result in a weakening of democracy and citizenship as well as a less productive society.

What is interesting about this gloomy picture of America is the fact that each author (Wood, Postman, Putnam) reached similar conclusions as to the initial onset of these societal ills (1960's), yet from somewhat different perspectives. This problem of a passive, fragmented, self-absorbed, anti-intellectual, and civically unengaged populace is the driving force and rationale of my inquiry. However, it is not sufficient merely to point out the negative aspects of American society and leave the reader to wonder if this isolation and state of disengagement are insurmountable problems for American citizens. Instead, a thoughtful and logical response to this gray societal picture is presented through the construction of an imaginative, but viable, alternative. Though there are numerous obstacles to be identified and negotiated, public leisure services may potentially be a major player in such an alternative.

Re-Building a Classical Foundation for Leisure and Leisure Services

And happiness is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy that we may have leisure.
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Aristotle and Leisure

Leisure is not a concept that frequently occurs throughout the works of Aristotle, even though it does play an important role in his ethical and political writings. In fact, Aristotle states that "the first principle of all action is leisure" (*NE* $1337^{b}32$). Since he follows this statement by contrasting leisure with occupation, we could perhaps interpret leisure as being the opposite of work. But this would be a misguided interpretation suggested by the contemporary usage of the word 'occupation'. It seems that Aristotle meant the word in its literal sense of *being occupied*. This suggests that one may be occupied with work, but also with other "necessary" things. What work and these other activities have in common is that they are engaged *only* for the sake of things besides themselves—they are considered necessary as well as having some utility. Stocks (1936) in his work on *schole* articulated its opposite, *ascholia*, as "the exclusion of autonomous self-directing activity" (p. 181), in other words, being at another's "beck and call." If *ascholia* is leisure's opposite, then leisure will consist of the inclusion of autonomous, self-directing activity pursued for its own sake.

One such activity presented by Aristotle is contemplation. For Aristotle, "happiness is thought to depend on leisure" (*NE* $1177^{b}5$) while happiness is "activity in accordance with excellence" (*NE* $1177^{a}11$). Since the most excellent thing in man is a divine element, and the activity of the divine is contemplation "within the bubble of leisure" (Broadie, 2003), leisure would be contemplative if it is to contribute to a happy life. But on the surface this conceptualization does not seem plausible. The life of man requires the procurement of certain basic necessities prior to pursuing the fruits of leisure. Therefore, because of the practical demands of everyday life, uninterrupted and continuous contemplation is virtually impossible for the vast majority of people. Perhaps this is why Aristotle follows up with the statement "But such a life would be too high for man" (*NE* $1177^{b}27$). Thus, a happy life and the activities that

bring it about cannot be purely contemplative. So if excellent activity is happiness, other forms of excellent activity must exist. Otherwise, a happy life would be off limits to man. Aristotle does introduce two such alternatives: amusements and political activity.

Aristotle dismisses amusement and its prospects for happiness for several reasons. First, he states that "amusement is a sort of relaxation, and we need relaxation because we cannot work continuously" (*NE* $1176^{b}35$-36). This indicates that amusements are means to other ends and not self-sufficient. Second, Aristotle dismisses amusements because they lack seriousness, and "serious things are better than laughable things" (*NE* $1177^{a}3$). Finally, he disqualifies amusements because they lack exertion.

Political activity and its prospects for bringing about a happy life is viewed differently. While Aristotle does think the life of the philosopher possesses better prospects for happiness, he does not completely dismiss the potential of political activity, and more especially since he labels political activity as honorable. This leads to the important questions posed and answered in this essay. First, does Aristotle conceptualize leisure as activity? Second, if so, what type or types of activity is leisure? Third, how ought this activity be arranged, and what role, if any, should the statesman play in the provision *of*, and education *for*, such leisure of his citizens?

Contemporary Scholarship and Aristotelian Leisure

It is generally agreed that two substantial works on Aristotelian leisure have been influential to the academic field of leisure studies and have served as inspiration and points of departure for further scholarship: Pieper's (1950) *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* and de Grazia's (1962) *Of Time, Work, and Leisure.* Due to their influence, and because these works have acted as the sole connection between Aristotle's writings and leisure researchers, I construct a

substantial critique of these two works using my own interpretation of Aristotelian leisure developed in the beginning of Chapter 2.

Pieper's *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* introduces a religion-oriented interpretation of Aristotelian leisure. The focus is on a relaxed and receptive conceptualization of leisure that stands in stark contrast to the contemporary view of work. Pieper suggests that leisure is a serene state of mind, quite devoid of intentional and purposive action. Pieper's recurring theme of religious worship has lead one eminent Aristotelian ethics scholar (Broadie, 2004) to state "Pieper's essay ties leisure so closely to the sacred and sacramental that there may seem not to be enough of a topic left over for non-religious philosophical reflection" (p. 22). Nevertheless, the book's theme of relaxation has not gone unnoticed by leisure scholars, although Kleiber (2000) pointed out that the connection between leisure and relaxation, despite the popularity of Pieper's book, continues to be neglected. Pieper also follows the Aristotelian tradition of valuing the intellect in leisure, rejecting the idea that intellectual activity must always be work-like.

Sebastion de Grazia's *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* is another leisure *classic* that takes its underpinnings from Aristotelian leisure. Whereas Pieper's was primarily a religious interpretation, de Grazia's focus is on activity. Intellectual activity, in particular, is offered as the foundation of Aristotle's leisure. While contemplation is offered as the quintessential leisure activity, de Grazia's text does offer an abundance of opportunities to situate Aristotelian leisure into a social context where civic excellence may be developed (Hemingway 1988). Unfortunately, the focus on contemplation in the book has caused many leisure scholars to misread de Grazia (and misunderstand Aristotle) as they conclude (wrongly) that Aristotle regarded leisure as reflected only in contemplation, placing it exclusively in the realm of elite philosophers. Indeed, because of this assumption, pioneers in the more practical and applied

areas of leisure studies sought to dismiss scholarly activities such as interpretations of Aristotle as intellectual "game playing" (see Sessoms, 1984). But as Sandel (1996) points out:

> …philosophy inhabits the world from the start; our practices and institutions are embodiments of theory. We could hardly describe our political life, much less engage in it, without recourse to a language laden with theory—of rights and obligations, citizenship and freedom, democracy and law. Political institutions are not simply instruments that implement ideas independently conceived; they are themselves embodiments of ideas…what we cannot escape is that we live some theory all the time (p. ix).

Therefore, one challenge for the current analysis is to point out ways in which Aristotle and his conceptualization of leisure may be viewed as practical and political, how this is related to the intellectual component, and where and how the Aristotelian leisure theory shows up in the practice of leisure service provision.

Constructing a Bridge to the Past: A Re-creation of the History of Community Leisure Services

Every community is established with a view to some good.
Aristotle, *Politics*

Re-construction through Text

Community leisure services in America, as a profession, has witnessed substantial changes during the twentieth century. Textbooks on the subject from the 1950's and 1960's (Butler, 1959; Meyer & Brightbill, 1956;) read quite differently from later works (Kraus, 1971; Sessoms, 1983). Community recreation and leisure services have become increasingly more professionalized (Glover 2001; Hemingway, et al, 2001) and better-funded (Crompton, 1999). An examination of the texts that deal substantially with community recreation and leisure during the latter half of the twentieth century may provide insight into how it has changed. In particular, a preliminary reading of the community leisure corpus reveals that references to and

discussions of such ideals as the *common good*, *character development*, and *intellectual growth* are more frequent in textbooks from the 50's and 60's (see Meyer & Brightbill, 1956; Butler, 1959; Nash, 1960) . In addition, references to *preferred/optimal experience*, *individual leisure constraint*, and *commercial, for-profit recreation* are more frequently found within texts from the 70's, 80's and 90's (e.g. Neulinger, 1981, Sessoms, 1983; Crossley, et al, 1997). Community leisure writings from the earlier period (at least on a surface reading of the texts) more clearly reflected classical leisure ideals in emphasizing positive community values and ethically minded behavior.

Imagining the Possibilities: Community Leisure Services' Transition to the Classical Model

The character of democracy creates democracy.
Aristotle, *Politics*

This essay would be incomplete without the identification, description, and explanation of potentially meaningful and practical community/government changes that could take place as a result of applying the research. The inspirations for this vision of leisure services derive from four sources.

First, leisure services as a "third place" is the theme taken from Ray Oldenburg's *The Great Good Place*. In Oldenburg's view, Americans live their lives on a *bipod*: work and family, while their European counterparts live life on a *tripod*: work, family, and a third place that is separate and distinct from the other two, although the work week in France is under heavy political pressure to become longer. According to Oldenburg, the activity occurring in third places, while it is a choice worthy for its own sake, is an essential component of a vibrant and healthy informal life that inspires and cultivates intellectual growth and creativity in a non-organized social environment. "The activity that goes on in third places is largely unplanned,

unscheduled, unorganized, and unstructured. Here, however, is its charm. It is just these deviations from the middle class penchant for organization that give the third place much of its character and allure and that allow it to offer a radical departure from the routines of home and work" (Oldenburg, 1989, p. 33). His book documents the disappearance of third places in America and its consequences. Given his description of third places and the activities that sustain them, those familiar with public leisure service agencies will notice their general absence. In the concluding chapter, I consider the potential for leisure services, guided by classic leisure principles, to become viable "third places." Oldenburg states "Neutral ground provides the place, and leveling sets the stage for the cardinal and sustaining activity of third places everywhere. That action is conversation" (p. 26).

Second, Nina Elisoph's *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life* (1998) is driven by the question of "how do citizens create contexts for political conversation in everyday life?" (p. 10). Through her research Elisoph has identified informal, broad political debate as being necessary to sustain a democratic form of government, and based on her research findings has concluded that Americans avoid such conversation/activity, especially in formal settings. She believes that communities lack the appropriate spaces and venues for informal political discourse. Even though this activity is identified as having certain positive democratic outcomes, Eliasoph states that "the point is that being able to talk can be a good in itself" (p. 18). Such a position is consistent with the classical leisure position presented in this essay, and I provide arguments that support leisure services as a viable venue for such informal political discourse.

Third, the societal problems documented in Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) play an important role in the rationale for this essay. However, it also presents us with an alternative

vision for leisure services as a social capital generating agency that promotes and nurtures not only formal networks but also informal social connections. In particular, his arguments concerning libraries have enabled me to advocate a more active relationship/partnership between public libraries and leisure service agencies.

Fourth, the post-intellectualism described by Wood (1999) in *Post-Intellectualism and the Decline of Democracy: The Failure of Reason and Responsibility in the Twentieth Century* provides the intellectual framework for re-constructing classical leisure in contemporary American society.

Finally, a new public philosophy for public leisure services will require new types of educational preparation for public leisure servants. I close the essay by taking stock of leisure studies in universities and colleges to determine the prospects for meaningful and substantial changes that will be required for Aristotelian leisure to move from theory to practice.

It is now time to introduce the philosophical underpinning for this entire essay: Aristotelian leisure.

CHAPTER 2

RE-BUILDING A CLASSICAL FOUNDATION FOR LEISURE SERVICES

Leisure is the mother of philosophy. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

The purpose of this chapter is to locate Aristotle's usage of the word leisure in *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* and then to determine what he means by the concept and what role it plays in his political and ethical philosophical systems. I have chosen the two texts mentioned for two reasons: first, contemporary scholarship addressing leisure in leisure studies (Hemingway, 1988; Simpson & Yoshioka, 1992; Sylvester, 1999), philosophy (Broadie, 2004; Owen, 1981; Stocks, 1936) and political science (Bartlett, 1994; Mulgan, 1990) has been based exclusively on *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* as have a variety of books addressing Aristotelian leisure (see Broadie, 1991; Cooper, 1999; Dare, Welton, & Coe, 1987; de Grazia, 1960; Pieper, 1952; Richardson-Lear, 2004); second, the concept of leisure has a vital role in Aristotle's philosophical system in these two works (he uses the word leisure "schole" a total of 53 times), whereas his usage of leisure in other works (such as *Poetics*) is more casual and less frequent. In the pages that follow, I identify and articulate a clear and consistent Aristotelian definition of leisure as derived from these original texts, determine leisure's function within Aristotle's ethical and political philosophy, and document the extent to which contemporary scholarship in leisure studies, political science, and philosophy have adhered to this Aristotelian conceptualization of leisure. In addition, the ability to interpret Aristotle's position on leisure depends largely on his usage of related concepts such as recreation, play, amusement,

community, and work; for the path to a clear definition of leisure will be aided by determining what is *not* leisure.

Generally speaking, Aristotle's views on leisure are these: leisure facilitates an individual's (and community's) quest for the *end*, the *telos* of life; *eudaimonia* (human flourishing) crucially depends on leisure, for leisure is a necessary source of happiness; leisure is different from mere relaxation; thus leisure activities should not be trivial amusements; leisure is the space for precious (*timios*) as distinct from necessary activities; thus, leisure activities, though serious, should be quite different in kind from the labor that goes into building up the resources for leisure; leisure activities are valuable for their own sake; human beings need education for leisure; what to do in leisure is the most fundamental question of politics (Broadie, 2004). I shall begin with all appearances (9 total) of leisure in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Leisure in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

The *Nicomachean* Ethics "is about what is good for human beings. It asks and proposes an answer to the question 'What is the chief or primary good for man?', and it looks at the implications of its answers" (Broadie, 2002, p. 9). Leisure, as a concept, is assigned an essential role by Aristotle in his efforts to answer questions regarding man's prospects for achieving the best life. Leisure in the *Nicomachean Ethics* may be divided into three general groups: two found within Books I-VIV that follow the themes of relaxation and amusement on the one hand and political/social activity on the other, and one found within Book X that follows a theme of theoretical contemplation. It should be noted here that Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics* has been viewed as inconsistent with the remainder of the text due to its sudden introduction of the contemplative life as the best life for human beings (see Sabine, 1961 and Irwin, 1990). This has

considerable consequences for the concept of leisure (given its prominent role in Aristotle's arguments) since Book X, as we shall see later in this chapter, seems to have been highly influential in contemporary leisure scholarship, leading scholars to hastily conclude that the contemplative life is the best life, and thus, conceptualizing leisure as essentially contemplative.

The task here is to determine if the usage of leisure in Book X is consistent or compatible with those entries in the first nine books. The problem lies in the fact that Aristotle concludes in *NE* Book I that happiness is excellent practical activity, while he reaches a different conclusion (happiness is theoretical contemplation) in *NE* Book X. It is my contention that these apparently disparate views are, in fact, consistent and even complementary to one another. Indeed, Broadie (1991) argues that both excellent practical activity and theoretical contemplative activity are two essential components to a complete and happy life. From this perspective, Aristotle concludes that practical and theoretical activity, taken individually, are incomplete in regards to the happy life. However, a life of excellent practical activity "crowned" by the contemplative life leads to a complete, self-sufficient and happy life for the individual. Neither practical nor theoretical activity is more important or valuable than the other. This argument paves the way for leisure to be viewed as both practical/political and theoretical/contemplative.

Occurrences of the word "leisure" in Books I-VIV are unique not only for their theme of relaxation, but also because of the modest number of entries (2). The first appearance of the word leisure in the Nicomachean Ethics occurs in Book IV Chapter 8. This portion of the text (*NE* 1127b33) continues Aristotle's quest for identifying the excellences of man. These excellences (or virtues), according to Aristotle, are the middle ground or mean between two contraries (i.e. bravery is the mean between foolhardiness and cowardice). Within this discussion, Aristotle first introduces leisure as an aspect of rest. He suggests that leisure coexists

with amusement in the relaxed life of man. This relaxed life, if lived properly, is a social life with the preeminent activity being conversation. Aristotle's discussion of excellences as means between contraries continues in this passage as he presents three sorts of men in social intercourse: the buffoon, the tactful, and the bore. Since the meanings of these words are self-evident, I will avoid a discussion of them. However, what is important from a leisure perspective in this passage is threefold. First, Aristotle's first usage of the word leisure in *NE* places it squarely in the social/political life of man. Second, a close reading of Chapter 8 suggests that Aristotle is using the words leisure and amusement interchangeably. For Aristotle begins Chapter 8 with the statement "life includes rest…and in this is included leisure and amusement" (*NE* 1127b33) but he uses only the word amusement throughout the remainder of the chapter. He also states that "relaxation and amusement are thought to be a necessary element of life" *NE* 1128b3). This leads the reader to believe that relaxation and amusements are indeed a form of leisure activity. Third, Aristotle uses the three types of conversationalists to suggest that the one that holds the middle ground (neither too much nor too little leisure/amusement) is the excellent man: "They differ in that one is concerned with truth and the other two with pleasantness" (*NE* 1128b5). Aristotle, in discussing amusements, states that overindulgence in such constitutes the "ridiculous side of things" (*NE* 1128a13), whereas those who lack leisure/amusement/relaxation have nothing substantial to contribute to the "general social intercourse of life" (*NE* 1128b8). Such blending of leisure with amusement and relaxation may have consequences for leisure studies scholarship that we shall see later in this chapter.

The second (and final) occurrence of leisure in *NE* outside of Book X occurs in Book VIII Chapter 9: "For the Ancient sacrifices and gatherings seem to take place after the harvest as a sort of first fruits, because it was at these seasons that people had most leisure" (*NE* 1160a26).

The usage of leisure in this passage seems to indicate an opportunity to relax from labor (*ponos*). Specifically, it suggests that leisure is made possible by the absence of necessary activities (tending the harvest) for the individual. Thus, a condition of freedom has arisen where individuals have the opportunity to choose from a variety of potential activities. In addition, the work and effort (non-leisure) invested in planting and tending the harvest seems to have been for the sake of the communal festival (leisure). However, this individual freedom of choice is not isolated, but is located within the political community, including social clubs, festivals, and religious rituals. This portion of the *NE* focuses on friendship and community. Within this context of community, Aristotle states that "some communities seem to arise for the sake of pleasure" but communities such as social clubs or religious guilds should be considered political communities because they aim "not at present advantage, but at what is advantageous for life as a whole" (*NE* 1160a20).

Regardless of the meanings of Aristotelian community and friendship, it is worth noting that Aristotle, again, has introduced the concept of leisure within a social/political context involving some interaction between community members. However, as with the previous passage, I am not suggesting that leisure, according to Aristotle's usage, is limited to a social/political context. Indeed, leisure, as it appears in the text, has no immediately identifiable function thus far. Instead, it is a condition of human life that may be utilized for an infinite variety of purposes outside of occupation, labor, or other necessary/obligatory activities. Leisure is not something that exists by nature for man, according to Aristotle, but instead, seems to be something that is created by man and then filled with activities. However, because of the large number of alternative uses of leisure, choice will inevitably be essential to the concept of leisure. In fact, Aristotle dedicates much of *NE* Book III to the idea of voluntary choice. Aristotle states

that the "exercise of the excellences…is in our own power" (NE 1113b6). He goes on to argue that the best state of character (excellences/virtues) is not found within man by nature, but instead requires education, choice, and practice: "Now not to know that it is from the exercise of activities on particular objects that states of character are produced is the mark of a thoroughly senseless person" (*NE* 1114a10).

Because man is not excellent by nature, he must have the necessary leisure to develop, maintain, and strengthen excellent qualities of character, but this requires a conscious choice on the part of the individual to utilize his leisure in an excellent manner. This implies that leisure is not inherently excellent, and may, in fact, be used in damaging ways. In addition, this view of leisure also implies that excellent character cannot be developed in isolation, but will require leisure activity engagement with other individuals. I have called the reader's attention to the social/political context because I think it gives us insight into Aristotle's view of leisure in *NE* Books I-VIV: a condition of freedom from necessity that is created by individuals and groups through non-leisure activities (*ascholia* for the sake of *schole*) and then engaged or used according to individual and/or communal preference. However, we shall see that leisure with its contemplative emphasis in Book X appears to have a quite different meaning.

The first occurrence of the word "leisure" in *NE* Book X (*NE* 1176b17) is used in the context of free time spent engaging in preferred activities or pursuits as he discusses the pastimes of tyrants. This usage is not so important in comparison with the passages that follow addressing how man chooses his activities, but it does illustrate the fact that those with power and wealth often abuse leisure. Aristotle states how man seeks the most desirable activity that is "in accordance with his own state, and, therefore, to the good man that which is in accordance with excellence" (*NE* 1176b26-28). However, Aristotle moves immediately to disqualify amusement

as the most desirable pursuit for the good man. His argument consists of the premise that the activity of man is directed toward some end, and if there be more than one end, toward the one deemed best (*NE* Book I). He also states that "everything that we choose we choose for the sake of something else—except happiness, which is an end" (*NE* 1176b31). Happiness, then, is identified as the end toward which all activities of man aim. By disqualifying amusement as the most desirable pursuit for man, Aristotle is implying that amusement (and the activities found within this category) is, in fact, not an end. He suggests that amusement, in its proper role, provides relaxation for the sake of exerting oneself, and that the excellent life "requires exertion and does not consist in amusement" (*NE* 1177a2).

This disqualification of amusement and relaxation as desirable pursuits for their own sake has direct implications for determining Aristotle's conceptualization of leisure. For the references to leisure in the earlier portions of the *NE* suggest that leisure is synonymous with amusement and relaxation, and thus, would appear to disqualify leisurely activities as being choice worthy for their own sakes. As we shall see later, amusement is just one dimension of leisure, a condition of freedom that may be used properly or improperly. This dismissal would present few problems for the reader if not for the concluding passages in Book X of the *NE* where leisure is used in an entirely different way.

Perhaps the most famous quote for leisure scholars in the *NE* is "happiness is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy that we may have leisure" (*NE* 1177b5-6). This usage of the word leisure suggests that it is a part of the end, not a mere instrument for eventually finding happiness. Leisure is a necessary condition for happiness in that one could never truly flourish as a human if he lacks the freedom from necessity for doing truly human things (knowledge seeking and social/political engagement for their own sake). However, leisure cannot be

considered a sufficient condition for happiness because activities chosen and engaged within the context of leisure may lead toward or away from human flourishing. Chapter 7 in Book X of the *NE* is primarily dedicated to presenting leisure (the word leisure occurs six times in this chapter) in just this way and goes further by using leisure to re-examine the three candidates' (life of pleasure, political life, contemplative life) potential for being the "best" life. The life of pleasure is disqualified first because it seeks amusements for their own sakes (primarily physical pleasures such as eating, drinking, sexual activity—the life of cattle).

At first glance this dismissal of the life of pleasure seems to be erroneous since amusements, like happiness, are sought for their own sakes. However, the consequences of these activities provide evidence against their candidacy for being the best life due to their negative impact on individual health. These pursuits, for Aristotle, result in an absurd end for life. He also disqualifies the life of pleasure because most animals may seek and participate in such activities which do not exercise man's highest faculties, whereas the "best thing in us" (*NE* 1177a14) is the intellect. Note that amusements are, for Aristotle, leisure activities, although a life of amusing activities stands as an example of leisure improperly used.

Thus, how an individual *creates* a condition of leisure is not as important, for Aristotle, as how the individual actually *uses* his leisure. In this conceptualization, leisure acts as a *telos* for non-leisure activities, since non-leisure activities are for the sake of leisure activities. In turn, the happy life stands as the end toward which leisure activities should be directed, however, as noted previously, individual choice may result in leisure activities that do not aim toward the highest good (*eudaimonia*). The assumption on Aristotle's part is that individuals immersed in a life of excellent actions and habits will make the right choices over time, whereas those that have not been so immersed will make decisions consistent with their (non-excellent) character. Thus, if

individuals are not born with excellent character (and Aristotle makes it clear that he does not think moral excellence is inherent), some sort of leisure education will be essential to their development (during their youth).

At this point in the analysis, several conclusions may be drawn about leisure based on a reading of *NE*. First, leisure, for Aristotle, is not inherently good. Each passage in the *NE* demonstrates that individual choice plays an essential role in determining the quality of leisure activities. This quality depends upon the state of the individual's character and whether he, in his selection of leisure pursuits, moves toward or away from it. Second, although the themes provided in the beginning of this chapter suggest that the word leisure is used in reference to relaxation/amusement, political/social activity, and contemplation, the *NE* as a whole hints that leisure is a sort of freedom to consider and select certain activities that are engaged in willingly after the necessities of life have been procured. In other words, leisure is a condition of being free from obligation which is then filled with some sort of activity, or as Richardson-Lear states "Leisure in Aristotle's sense is not a time of relaxation (though it may be used that way); it is the condition of being free from the demands posed by our natural desire for the necessities of life. A leisurely life is one that is not driven by the need to satisfy necessary desires" (p. 185). This conclusion is reached through the study of the role or function of leisure in Aristotle's ethical and political systems. Thus, it is a mistake to examine passages containing leisure in isolation from the rest of the treatise. One consequence of arriving at such a conceptualization of leisure (Richardson-Lear's or mine) is that it questions the very necessity of leisure for mankind. For Aristotle, leisure is not vital to the survival of man. Instead, leisure is viewed as necessary for human flourishing. Thus, leisure is not presented by Aristotle as a right held by individuals that cannot be denied them. One can easily conceive of a community of individuals that has no

leisure due to economic, geographic, and political circumstances. Instead, leisure is that aspect of life that is made possible only when the basic necessities (such as food, shelter, peace, etc…) have been secured.

Perhaps this is why this particular conceptualization of leisure was introduced and thrived in western societies (because of the promise of prosperity for large numbers of people). Certainly, the majority of those residing in ancient Athens -- including women, children, slaves, and foreign-born workers --were denied access to the life of leisure. The contributions made by these groups of individuals made leisure possible for the citizens because they conducted the labor that satisfied the basic necessities, thus allowing citizens to turn their attention to amusements, politics, and philosophy.[1] Although this exclusion is viewed as reprehensible today, Ober (1989) states that "moral censure should not obscure our appreciation…of the new democratic political order. For the first time in the recorded history of a complex society, *all* native freeborn males were political equals" (p. 7). Thus, leisure arrived with this newfound political freedom. However, it should be noted that leisure conceptualized as such may not find meaning and application in nation states or other political communities that are essentially non-democratic[2] and/or those whose citizens struggle to survive daily due to the lack of choice and/or securing the basic necessities. Also, the issue of *free riding* in relation to leisure (the elites enjoying leisure at the expense of the masses) is certainly not unfamiliar territory in contemporary western societies such as the U.S.

[1] The position that slaves and metics made leisure possible for Athenian citizens is debatable. See Balme, 1984 for an analysis of Athenian citizens perceptions of work and the general absence of slave labor on Athenian farms

[2] As we shall see later in this chapter, Aristotle weaves leisure into the very fabric of democratic government, rendering leisure almost inseparable from democracy because of free choice

If *Nicomachean Ethics* stands as an ethical and political inquiry into what constitutes the good life, then *Politics* stands as a practical and strategic guide for the implementation of the philosophy found in *NE*. It is to the *Politics* that I now turn.

Leisure in *Politics*

In the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle argues that all activities of men aim at some end or good and then moves to introduce and examine several types of lives in order to determine which offers the best prospects for happiness (*eudaimonia*). In the *Politics* Aristotle continues this work founded on the premise that political communities, like the individuals comprising them, have a "view to some good" (*Pol* 1252^{a}1-2). Aristotle categorizes the various forms of government, along with their respective types of statesmen and citizen characteristics, in order to determine which possess the best prospects for becoming the best state. As an extension of the *Nicomachean Ethics*[3], leisure (*schole*) assumes a central role in the political organization and activity of a community's citizens and leaders. The problem of leisure is stated in Aristotle's first usage of *schole* in the *Politics*:

> That in a well-ordered state the citizens should have leisure and not have to provide for their daily wants is generally acknowledged, but there is a difficulty in seeing how this leisure is to be attained (*Pol* 1269^{a}34-36).

Again we see that leisure is introduced as a freedom from the obligatory activity required to secure the basic necessities of life. This passage may be interpreted two different ways. It may be read literally, resulting in the conclusion that no citizen should have to work and that all should be able to live a leisured life. It may also be read as citizens should be able to create and enjoy the condition of leisure, which suggests that some work (*ascholia* and/or *ponia*) may be

[3] It should be noted that this ethical and political exercise, for Aristotle, is a practical one: "The end aimed at is not knowledge but action" (*NE* 1095^{a}5)

necessary to bring such conditions about, but that it is the duty of the statesman to orchestrate the provision of the basic needs of daily life, for Aristotle states "Even if the legislator does not care to protect the good from poverty, he should at any rate secure leisure for them while in office" (*Pol* 1273^{b}6-7). My own interpretation is that the former is more accurate given Aristotle's position that not everyone is suited to the leisured life[4] (e.g. those engaged in the *banausic* crafts). However, Aristotle's position is not necessarily a reflection of ancient Athenian society. The passage listed above refers more to an ideal than to ancient Athenian reality given the diverse mixture of professions and practical crafts represented on the juries in the law courts (see especially Balme, 1984).

Whereas *Nicomachean Ethics* contains only 9 usages of the word leisure (*schole*), *Politics* contains 44 entries. As with *NE*, a large number of entries are located primarily in two locations: *Pol* Books VII and VIII. Unlike the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the word leisure (*schole*) is used in a very consistent manner revolving around two themes. The first is leisure as a condition of freedom from obligatory/necessary activity which allows the development of excellent character and the engagement of political activity. The second introduces the need for leisure education, specifically for the youth, as a preparation for political life. I shall begin with an analysis of the usages of leisure following the first theme.

Leisure as a condition of freedom from obligatory/necessary activity allows for the creative and meaningful expression of the self. For Aristotle, this expression assumes a variety of forms. The first and most prominent expression of leisure is political activity. Aristotle

[4] The elitism of Aristotle's political philosophy is apparent in his arguments that a community properly ordered requires a leisured citizenry that has a limited understanding of practical matters (such as business) but that avoids actual engagement in such work so that it may steer the community in the proper directions. In addition, the properly ordered community, in order to survive, requires individuals to engage in such occupations, forgoing the possibility of leisure. In some ways, this is not so different from modern day democracies. [this seems more about the *use* of leisure to me]

makes it very clear that leisure is essential to an individual's ability to be politically active: "Leisure is necessary both for the development of excellence and the performance of political duties" (*Pol* 1329[a]1). The primary threat to securing and utilizing this leisure in the *Politics* is work. Passages such as "For the citizens being compelled to live by their labor have no leisure and attend assemblies only when necessary" (*Pol* 1292[b]28-29), "Being poor, they (farmers, agricultural workers) have no leisure, and therefore do not often attend the assembly" (1318[b]11-12) and "Leisure of itself gives pleasure and happiness and enjoyment of life, which are experienced, not by the busy man, but by those who have leisure" (*Pol* 1338[a]1-3) suggest that work is a formidable obstacle to leisure, specifically political duties, and that the life of pure occupation is not a self-sufficient one.[5] These are but a few passages that reflect the conceptualization of leisure as a condition of freedom from obligatory/necessary activity in order to express one's self through political activity. On the whole, there are 14 passages containing the word leisure between *NE* Book II Ch. 9 and Book VI Ch. 4 that consistently reflect this particular conceptualization of leisure.

It is worth noting here that leisure, as conceptualized by Aristotle, is embedded in the very fabric of certain forms of government. Aristotle, in Book III of the *Politics* identifies and defines the three general forms of government that exist: the rule of one (kingship), the rule of a few (aristocracy), and the rule of the many (democracy). Even though Aristotle's own preference reflects a general unease regarding rule by the masses (democracy) and rule by the tyrant (kingship), the way Aristotle defines leisure, and the role leisure plays in his philosophical system disqualifies one form of government (kingship) and casts doubt on another (aristocracy)

[5] For Aristotle, self-sufficiency is a chief characteristic of *eudaimonia*: "The complete good is thought to be self-sufficient" (*NE* 1097[b]8-9). This notion follows Aristotle's arguments for the supremacy of activities sought for their own sakes since they are self-sufficient and lack nothing. Leisure, too, is closely associated with choosing an activity for its own sake, both for Aristotle and for contemporary leisure studies (See *NE* Book 1, Chapter 7 for Aristotle's discussion of self-sufficiency).

as to their potential for creating and sustaining the conditions of leisure for the citizens. Kingship (and its perversion, Tyranny) cannot create and sustain leisure because of the lack of choice for citizens, and because of a radically different form of political duty for the subjects that denies creative self-expression and meaningful, self-directed participation. Aristocracy, too, presents some potential obstacles for leisure due to the elitist and exclusionary nature of political life that often occurs in such a form of government. Democracy, then, seems to offer the best prospects for a leisured state, with the key element being choice in self-expression: "A man should live as he likes. This is the mark of liberty, since, on the other hand, not to live as a man likes is the mark of a slave" (*Pol* 1317^{b} 11-12). This has implications for leisure due to Aristotle's statement "There is no leisure for slaves[6]" (*Pol* 1334^{a} 20-21). However, living as one likes poses moral problems, which Aristotle does not fail to note: "Every man should be responsible to others, nor should anyone be allowed to do just as he pleases; for where absolute freedom is allowed there is nothing to restrain the evil which is inherent in every man[7]" (*Pol* 1318^{b} 37-1319^{a} 2).

The second general context for leisure in the *Politics* concerns education. He prefaces this conversation by re-affirming his general position on leisure:

> Nature requires that we should be able, not only to work well, but to use leisure well; for as I must repeat once again, the first principle of all action is leisure. Both are required, but leisure is better than occupation and is its end (*Pol* 1337^{b} 30-34).

Having reinforced the notion that activities sought for their own sake are nobler than activities sought for the sake of other things (including work for the sake of leisure), Aristotle

[6] This position does not prevent Aristotle form exploring (and even advocating) certain instances where liberty (and hence leisure) should be offered to slaves (see *Pol* Book VIII Ch 10).

[7] It is worth noting here that while Aristotle is clear in his position that man is not, by nature, good, he seems to take the position that man, by nature, is evil. But perhaps he is just saying that man inherently has the *capacity* for evil (just as he has the *capacity* for excellence). However, one requires leisure while the other does not. For instance, one may procure the necessities of life by robbing or killing others and taking theirs.

suggests that individuals must learn the proper use of leisure through education since one of the most fundamental (and necessary) questions to be asked by individuals is "What ought we to do when at leisure?" (*Pol* 1337^{b} 34-35). Aristotle begins this discussion of leisure education in Book VIII Ch. 3 with the following passage:

> It is clear then that there are branches of learning and education which we must study merely with a view to leisure spent in intellectual activity, and these are to be valued for their own sake *Pol* 1338^{a} 9-12).

That the most complete and noble use of leisure is intellectual should come as no surprise given Aristotle's philosophy of the tripartite nature of the soul. However, the problems brought to light in *NE* Book X involving theoretical activity and practical activity are not an issue in the conclusion of the *Politics*. The passage above suggests that leisure be an intellectual activity exercising reason, however, it does not suggest a preference for either practical or theoretical reason. If there is a slight leaning it is toward the practical. This is illustrated by Aristotle's preferred leisure activity in the education of the youth: "There remains, then, the use of music for intellectual enjoyment in leisure" (*Pol* 1338^{a} 20-21). Aristotle states that music (and poetry) is noble and sought for its own sake, but then asks why anyone should have knowledge of it. His answer involves the amusement and relaxation it provides, its conduciveness to excellence, and the intellectual enjoyment it provides to the individual. Each seems to be very practical in nature, although the last may be a practical-theoretical mix. Based upon Aristotle's statements, one may interpret these reasons for acquiring musical knowledge as being for the sake of things besides itself instead of for its own sake; however, Aristotle suggests that each of the three reasons are essential to the individual's quest for happiness and that happiness is an end, not a means. Therefore, leisure, when used in the proper way (political activity, music, poetry, etc…) facilitates both the means to an end as well as the end itself.

It is in this fashion that Aristotle closes the *Politics.* As with the *Nicomachean Ethics*, leisure appears more frequently as Aristotle begins to offer answers to the questions driving the inquiry. In fact, Aristotle uses the word leisure (*schole*) a total of 29 times in the last two books of the *Politics*; more than double the amount appearing in the first six books. Again, Aristotle has reinforced the idea that leisure is established and cultivated in accordance with the character of man (who is intellectual and social by nature). The activities sought and engaged in leisure allow for individuals to strengthen character, but are freely chosen. Thus, leisure that propels individuals toward human flourishing, as in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is a condition of freedom from obligatory/necessary activities, consisting of activities freely chosen for their own sake, allowing for creative self-expression through a variety of intellectual and social activities that build and strengthen excellent character, both for individuals and political communities. In addition, amusement (*paidia*) and recreation (*anapasis*)[8] are also situated in the context of leisure, and play a supporting role (for the sake of) in man's ascent to more self-sufficient activities that bring one closer to true human flourishing. Of course activities engaged outside of the leisured condition, in Aristotle's view, should be for the sake of leisure. Thus, *schole* is the *telos* of *askolia*. Moreover, intellectual/social/political leisure activities act as a *telos* for recreations and amusements. Having sketched out Aristotle's position on the concept of leisure, I shall now turn to a critical examination of contemporary scholarship in the area of Aristotelian leisure.

Aristotelian Leisure –Contemporary Interpretations

Aristotle's views on leisure have not gone unnoticed by leisure scholars, philosophers, historians, political scientists, theologians, psychologists, and even sociologists. Unfortunately,

[8] The word recreation (*anapasis*) appears only twice in *Politics* (none in *NE*) and is synonymous with relaxation after exertion (see *Pol* 1339^{a} 40-41 and 1342^{a} 1)

writers often use Aristotelian leisure as a point of departure as they "move on to develop and justify their own particular ideas in ways that have little to do with the Stagirite" (Owen, 1981, p. 714).[9] My intention here is to identify and briefly critique scholarly works that do more than use Aristotle as a launching pad. Hence, the writings that follow involve serious efforts to re-visit the original texts, explicate Aristotle's arguments related to the concept of leisure, and try to come to some understanding as to what leisure meant for Aristotle and his philosophical system. Moreover, some include commentary as to the possibility of Aristotelian leisure finding meaning and application in contemporary democratic societies. I shall compare the interpretations of Aristotelian leisure in these scholarly works to my own analysis presented earlier in this chapter.

For the purposes of critique and analysis, I have categorized the writings according to form of presentation (book-length treatments versus articles and/or book chapters and passages). Within these two groups, I generally present the works chronologically and by academic discipline. I shall begin with the book-length treatments.

Making the Connection: Pieper and de Grazia on Aristotelian Leisure

Prior to the appearance of Josef Pieper's *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (originally published in German in 1948), Aristotelian leisure was not a part of the scholarly discourse occurring in the professional and academic fields of leisure services/leisure studies,[10] although connections were occasionally made between the contemporary athletic aspect of recreation and ancient Greek sports (see Graves, 1953). These connections were drawn with a particular

[9] Some leisure scholars have brought the field's attention to such unwarranted interpretations of Aristotle. See Sylvester (1990) and his forceful critique of Neulinger (1981). Sylvester's position is that Neulinger, by identifying Aristotle as the foundation for his paradigm of leisure, has moved the concept of leisure completely into the subjective, and by doing so, essentially divorces leisure from morality.

[10] Although Aristotelian leisure was absent from leisure services/leisure studies, philosophy and classical political science produced small substantial works on the subject (see especially Stocks, 1936).

emphasis on the physical with little or no mention of the intellectual. In contrast, Pieper's essay on leisure introduces and situates the intellectual aspect of the concept as its core or essence. However, we shall see that Pieper's move to emphasize religion, coupled with his preference for contemplative intellection, will ultimately undermine his attempts to accurately interpret Aristotelian leisure.

Pieper begins his commentary on leisure by taking stock of the contemporary world of work that exists around him in war-ravaged Europe. His general conclusion about contemporary society is that it lacks leisure and is consumed by work. Work, as defined by Pieper, means "contribution to society." He also draws a clear and distinctive boundary between the realms of leisure and work. He immediately moves to rebuild contemporary society on a foundation of classical leisure. Leisure, he suggests, is synonymous with the religious *vita contemplative*. Leisure is "a door into freedom" (Pieper, 1952, p. 36) that takes us away from the world of work and is characterized by a divine sort of receptivity and relaxation. Pieper goes one step further and states that leisure (as a condition of the soul) is "non-activity" and is essentially useless. The terms "blind faith" (p. 30), "mysterious" (p. 31), "super-human condition" (p. 36) and "cultic celebration" (p. 50) are also used by Pieper to describe leisure, further strengthening the connections between leisure and religion. In fact, he devotes section IV to arguing that classical leisure and humanism are incompatible.

Pieper also addresses leisure education in his essay. He notes the etymology of *schole* and follows its transition to the English *school*. This sets the stage for his presentation of the distinguishing features between the liberal arts and the servile arts, aligning leisure with the former. He forcefully states that a leisured education is quite opposed to mere career training.[11]

[11] Oddly enough, since the first academic degree offering in leisure studies in 1937 (United States), these academic programs have always maintained a commitment to preparing their students for careers in the field.

By defining and characterizing work and leisure in this way, we may draw several conclusions about Pieper's essay. First, if classical leisure, as non-activity,[12] stands diametrically opposed to work, and work is defined as activity contributing to society, then leisure does not contribute to society[13]. This is a doubtful proposition and deviates significantly from Aristotle's views on the matter. Above all else, leisure, for Aristotle, is expressed through activity. In addition, leisure is necessarily connected with the ultimate end or good for Aristotle (*eudaimonia*), which is defined as activity.

Second, we may conclude that Pieper, like many other writers who tackle Aristotelian leisure, directs his analysis toward Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, clearly at the expense of the remainder of the work. As discussed earlier, *NE* Book X concludes that theoretical contemplation (and thus theoretical wisdom) is the path to the happy life, even though Aristotle spends the first nine books arguing against the life of pleasure and for the social/political life (and thus practical reason) as being a choice-worthy life for its own sake. Again, this is a common flaw in many of the texts I shall examine.[14] However, what makes Pieper's error more significant is the fact that *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* has been viewed for decades as a foundational text for leisure studies, and thus required reading for most future leisure scholars. Often, these future scholars, having read Pieper, draw conclusions about Aristotelian leisure without reading and analyzing the original works by Aristotle, as they also fail to incorporate a philosophical method of inquiry. This problem (dependence upon secondary sources, lack of formal training in philosophy) has been noticed by several scholars (see Hemingway, 1988;

[12] Although leisure is identified by Pieper as non-work, he quickly moves to distinguish idleness (*acedia)* from leisure (*schole*). In fact, he argues that idleness is the opposite of leisure, although his argument is less than convincing (see section III of *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*)
[13] What is implied here is that activity is necessary for making societal contributions.
[14] This contemplative interpretation will be most visible in the recreation and leisure studies textbooks that are examined in chapter three of my analysis

Hunnicutt, 1990; Sylvester, 1995); anecdotal evidence suggests that doctoral students in leisure studies continue to focus almost exclusively on specialized, secondary literature and that their research methods remain tethered to traditional methods of collecting and analyzing qualitative or quantitative data.

Third, the fact that Pieper places leisure squarely in the context of religion (specifically Christianity) is a movement away from the leisure views of Aristotle. Pieper introduces a popular Aristotle quote (from *NE* Book X Ch. 7) to support his position that leisure and the divine are interconnected: "Man cannot live this way insofar as he is man, but only insofar as something divine dwells in him" (p. 36). This is one of several instances where Aristotle suggests that humans strive (through their leisure activity) to emulate the activity of the divine, which is contemplation. Pieper's interpretation is inconsistent with Aristotle's view that the best life is a mixed life and that theoretical activity and wisdom crown and/or complete practical political activity and reason. Pieper refers to leisure as if it is inherently good, and that if the activity in question is not contemplative, it is not leisure. This is a mistake. Leisure, for Aristotle, is not inherently good. It is simply a condition of freedom from obligation and necessity that allows an individual to choose from a variety of activities that may or may not have positive outcomes (excellence). This does not mean that leisure is subjective for Aristotle. Instead, the freely chosen activities constituting leisure fall along a continuum between "bad" and "good". Thus, Aristotle (or anyone else) may state that activity X is a proper use of leisure, whereas activity Y is not, the criteria for such judgment being the character of the individual and whether the chosen activity is consistent with his character (and with his status as a conscious, reasoning human being). Thus, leisure is leisure, either properly or improperly used.[15]

[15] Even serious classical leisure scholars such as Sylvester (1987) have fallen victim to this line of reasoning: "If I perceive myself to be free and intrinsically motivated while robbing a gas station, am I at leisure? If so, it certainly is

Regardless of the inherent goodness (or badness) of leisure, the fact that Pieper relegates leisure to the divine realm has caused even Christian-minded philosophers to pause: "One does not have to be a non-believer to find off-putting such assertions as '…leisure…is not possible unless it has a durable and consequently living link with the *cultus*, with divine worship', and: 'When separated from worship, leisure becomes toilsome and work becomes inhuman' (Broadie, 2004, p. 22).

Fourteen years after the publication of *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, Sebastian de Grazia (1962) published his classical leisure-oriented *Of Time, Work, and Leisure*. In contrast to the Euro-centered discussion of Pieper, de Grazia spent equal time in the United States and the Mediterranean and the writing reflects this fact, as does the time period (well-removed from WW II but prior to formal participation in Vietnam). Also, leisure studies as an academic field was beginning to mature and was steadily accruing a substantial body of peer reviewed scholarship by the beginning of the 1970's.

Of Time, Work, and Leisure is a much lengthier work than Pieper's brief essay (416 pages compared to 60). It too takes as a point of embarkation a critical (and lamenting) look at contemporary society before undertaking a re-visitation to ancient Athenian society. The purpose of this journey back in time is to examine leisure, which, according to de Grazia, never existed before (and rarely after) this time period. In addition, it is no coincidence that democracy, too, was produced by this same society during the same time period, reinforcing the connections between democratic forms of government and leisure activity. For de Grazia, classical leisure holds some hope for a modern work-based civilization gone astray. Its redemption lies in a return to seeking and engaging activity that cultivates the mind. In this way,

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not what the classical thinkers had in mind as they reflected on the idea of leisure. For them leisure was not any activity that one engaged in when freed from necessity: it was excellent activity" (p. 185) Again, robbing gas stations may be leisure if it fulfills the criteria established earlier—it is simply an improper use of leisure.

de Grazia, like Pieper before him, rightly interprets Aristotelian leisure (when properly used) as being intellectual activity. However, unlike Pieper, de Grazia does not overly emphasize contemplation or religion in his interpretation of Aristotle[16]. In addition, Pieper relies almost exclusively on *Nicomachean Ethics* for his arguments, but de Grazia draws heavily from both *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. This addition assists de Grazia in rendering Aristotle's philosophical quest as being essentially a practical endeavor, not a theoretical one. The questions on leisure, for Aristotle, were driven by what people should do with leisure, not the metaphysical essence of leisure.[17]

The main tenets of de Grazia's work are clear. Leisure is "a state of being, a condition of man, which few desire and fewer achieve" (p. 5). It is distinct from the concept of free time (just as *Musse* is distinct from *Freizeit* for Pieper). Leisure is not dependent upon a democratic form of government for existence, but it is closely tied to it. It involves the pursuit of the highest form of leisure activity—intellection. Unlike Pieper, it does involve practical political activity and is guided and shaped by the form of government (whether it is aristocracy, democracy, etc…), although de Grazia concludes that leisure, if properly used, will enable individuals to move beyond politics.

Based upon these positions, which are derived from an interpretation of Aristotelian leisure, we may conclude that de Grazia on the whole has remained truer to the Aristotelian position laid out earlier in this chapter. Emphases on intellectual activity, politics, artistic forms of self-expression, reflection, and philosophical conversation are all consistent with the leisure

[16] This does not mean that religious and/or contemplative positions are not taken. See the concluding chapter in *Of Time, Work, and Leisure* for de Grazia's references to the divine, religious discovery, and "leisure transcending politics" (p. 414). If the book were condensed to an essay (like Pieper) de Grazia may, in fact, be criticized for over emphasizing religion and contemplation.

[17] Sylvester (1990) makes a similar point, although we must not forget that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* begins with the concept of leisure.

passages in *NE* and *Pol*. However, de Grazia deviates early in his analysis when he states "In Aristotle…a hint…that spare time, when misused, is not leisure" (p. 11). With this statement he does not provide specific passages from the Aristotelian corpus, nor do I find any such hints in my analyses of *NE* and *Pol*. Thus, de Grazia's conclusion that few people have or desire leisure is limited. It may be true that most people do not appreciate nor seek engagement in artistic activities such as painting, writing poetry, playing music, or doing philosophy, but as I stated before, it does not follow that most people do not have or desire leisure. It simply implies that most people use their leisure improperly (if by "proper" leisure we mean the classical brand espoused in this chapter). Furthermore, de Grazia recognizes the problem of leisure as discussed by Aristotle—that a state may suffer dire consequences if it does not know how to use leisure properly (derived from Aristotle's quote regarding the Spartans in the opening book of the *Politics*). If we take de Grazia's conclusions seriously (that 1. only a select few will achieve leisure, and 2. that a nation that does not know how to use leisure properly may eventually cease to exist), then we reach the conclusion that the nation inevitably will crumble.[18] For de Grazia, the potential for leisure to lift contemporary society out of its work-induced slumber is a rather bleak notion. Certainly he argues well for leisure's ability to transform a society, but because he adheres to the aristocratic notion of "leisure for the few," he leaves little hope for actual societal change. In addition, his view that leisure holds the potential to transcend politics, a notion that echoes Plato's call for philosopher kings rather than politicians, misses Aristotle's primary view of leisure—that politics is a worthy leisure pursuit, and that the best life is one that consists of the merging of the political and the philosophical.

[18] In fact, de Grazia is inconsistent with his use of the concept leisure here, since he has already taken the position that only activity of a certain sort is leisure, whereas his statement concerning the societal dangers of not knowing how to use leisure properly implies that individuals and the communities they comprise may, in fact, improperly use leisure.

Classical Leisure and Contemporary Scholarship

Besides the book-length treatments of classical leisure, there is a small body of scholarship (spanning 70 years of writing) that directly explores Aristotelian leisure. Specifically, this has not been (nor is yet) a very popular and appreciated line of research for leisure studies scholars.[19] I think this may be attributed to several factors. First, leisure studies as an academic discipline continues to become further removed from the parent disciplines that sparked initial interest in the topic. Previously, leisure studies faculty earned doctorates in the areas of political science, psychology, history, philosophy, sociology, economics, and business (just to name a few) and brought unique, specialized knowledge from these disciplines into leisure studies. Presently, most new faculty in leisure studies hold terminal degrees in leisure studies (if not all three degrees) with less intensive coursework in the parent disciplines.[20] Thus, meaningful connections between leisure studies and the parent disciplines are fading while new and existing connections are established and strengthened with fledgling academic programs as well as the practical agencies that hire the graduates of the undergraduate programs.

As for leisure studies and classical leisure, the feelings are mixed within the academic field. There are those who are proud to have a direct link to some of the greatest thinkers in western thought, but who know little about this classical tradition, although they may occasionally (and conveniently) utilize classical notions to further justify and legitimize their line of thought.. There are also those who adamantly spurn any connection with "old dead European white guys," seeing it as inevitably androcentric and ethnocentric, while choosing to ignore the rational thought of Aristotle and Plato. And then there are those who recognize the value of re-

[19] Perhaps this partially explains the relatively small number of Aristotelian leisure manuscripts in print, even though philosophers such as Broadie (2004) suggest a wealth of untapped lines of inquiry related to Aristotelian leisure.
[20] It is not uncommon for a doctoral student in leisure studies to graduate with as little as three courses in a cognate area (not including research methods courses, which are quickly filling up students' programs of study) and no expectation of acquiring a reading and writing proficiency in a foreign language.

considering historical traditions so that society may somehow benefit from the ideas and practices that preceded it. It is this last group that I will now consider.

Leisure Studies

The first substantial work on Aristotelian leisure is from Hemingway (1988). To date it stands as the most detailed and accurate interpretation. Hemingway begins his inquiry by providing a rationale for his endeavor, which reflects uneasiness with the proposal by another leisure scholar (Sessoms 1986) to dismiss and retire the work by de Grazia. The justification given by Sessoms was that classical leisure provided no immediate usefulness to the field of leisure studies and lacked the ability to find meaning and application in a very practically-minded discipline. Thus, at the outset, Hemingway intends to dispel the myth that the political and ethical philosophy of Aristotle (where the concept of leisure plays an important role) is theoretical, not practical. This involves a detailed account of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as a whole (in addition to the *Politics*), not just Book X. Hemingway's general interpretation may be found in one passage:

> The specific function (*ergon*) of leisure is the unfolding of practical reason and moral wisdom, that its characteristic end (*telos*) is *eudaimonia* or the felicitous life in pursuit of virtue, and that its excellence (*arête*) is that of the citizen whose character reflects civility in the active life of the *polis*. (p. 189)

We must applaud Hemingway for directing our attention to the practical/social/political contexts of classical leisure. However, this strength in his essay is also a weakness. Rather than taking the opportunity to strike a healthy balance[21] between the contemplative and theoretical conclusions of *NE* Book X and the political and practical conclusions of Books I-VIV, he moves to swing the pendulum to the opposite extreme, neglecting (and even discounting) the value and role of contemplation and theoretical activity and wisdom. For Aristotle, excellence is often

[21] After all, when in doubt when dealing with Aristotle's philosophy, find the middle ground (i.e. the mean)

presented as an intermediary between two extremes. Thus, the happy life is often a mixed life. Leisure, when properly used, is also a mix between practical and political activity on the one hand and theoretical and contemplative activity on the other. One is not necessarily better than the other. Instead, they complement and complete one another, and taken together, provide the fertile conditions for a happy life. In addition, most of the authors addressed here thus far have failed to introduce the value and contribution of work and amusements, and Hemingway is no exception. According to Aristotle, amusements are for the sake of work (if used properly), just as work is for the sake of leisure. Each assumes an important role in creating the conditions for the freedom of leisure.

A second flaw of Hemingway's analysis is his move to disqualify most activities sought and engaged in a condition of freedom as leisure on the grounds that they are not the right sorts of activity (i.e. intellectual, character building, civil, etc…). Hemingway interprets Aristotle's leisure as "an arena in which the virtues of civil character are sought, demonstrated, and refined" (p. 179), stating that it is not some 'empty existential space" waiting to be filled with any form of activity. As stated previously, leisure is not inherently excellent or good. Deliberation and choice eventually determine not whether an activity (freely chosen) is or is not leisure, but whether it (leisure) is properly aimed toward human flourishing.

Following Hemingway (1988) there are two contributions by Simpson & Yoshioka (1989; 1992). The earlier contribution merely echoes Hemingway (1988) and offers little that is unique. The later contribution attempts to explore Aristotelian leisure from an outdoor recreation perspective, an endeavor that is unique. The justification offered by the authors for conducting the project was the hope of introducing practical guidelines for professional recreation agencies (which are identified as not understanding classical leisure) to apply Aristotelian leisure in

practical (professional) settings. For the purposes of this analysis, the authors' strategies to implement Aristotelian leisure in outdoor recreation agencies are of little value. However, the authors' interpretation of Aristotelian leisure is of import.

The authors summarize Aristotelian leisure in five key points:

1. Leisure is activity, the basis of culture, and the source of the good life
2. Leisure includes music, art, community involvement, physical fitness, and above all, contemplation
3. Moderation is a prerequisite for leisure and for a good life
4. Peace is a prerequisite of leisure. Furthermore, a nation trained for war is ill prepared for peace and for leisure
5. People must be taught the proper use of leisure, and this education is the responsibility of the state (p. 220)

In their previous work, Simpson & Yoshioka (1989) followed the lead of Hemingway and backed almost entirely away from contemplative leisure. However, in this particular article, the authors move to give full consideration to both practical and theoretical activity. While they do not take the position that they complete one another, they do suggest that "Contemplation, music, art, physical prowess, and politics were all activities worthy of leisure" (1992, p. 223). Unfortunately, the authors repeat the mistakes of other leisure scholars in misreading Aristotle. Points 1, 3, and 5 appear contradictory and inconsistent. First, leisure is not defined (by Aristotle) as activity. It is a condition of being free from procuring the basic necessities for life, at which point free choices are made in regards to various activities. Moreover, point two states that moderation is a prerequisite for leisure, but what role can moderation play when individuals are procuring the necessities for life? Perhaps the authors mean to say that individuals should

exercise moderation once the necessities have been procured so that there will be plenty of opportunities for pursuing worthy activities introduced through state sponsored leisure education. Also, one issue here is whether the authors mean *doing* music and *doing* art or merely consuming them. Aristotle's position in the *Politics* is one of *doing*. One further criticism is the statement about a nation being trained for war as unfit for a leisured life. Certainly, Aristotle recognizes the need for peace, and to achieve and sustain peace, some substantial training and preparation for war is essential. The problem arises (as in Sparta) when a nation trains for war at the expense of other types of education and training that fill the hours of peace. Finally, the fifth Aristotelian guideline is one that appears to be quite controversial. The need for leisure education is clear in the *Politics*, however, taking one further step and claiming that this education is the responsibility of the state is less clear. Aristotle does state in the opening of Book VIII "That education should be regulated by law and should be an affair of state is not to be denied" (1337^{a} 33-34). What is unclear here is what, exactly, Aristotle means by the state. He fails to identify which form of government he is referring to, and thus, we must assume that all forms of government should be considered as candidates for education regulation. This has consequences for leisure education given the substantial differences between tyranny, aristocracy, and democracy. For example, if he is referring to democracy, then the education of leisure is the business of the citizens comprising the state, whereas leisure education in a kingship is guided by one hand alone (or in the case of aristocracy, by the hands of a select few).

The final piece of scholarship does not focus on Aristotelian leisure, but instead, focuses on ancient Athenian leisure. Thus, I shall make a few remarks about Sylvester (1999). The crux of Sylvester's essay is that while leisure scholars have studied Aristotelian and Platonic leisure, they have failed to study "the classical ideal of leisure in ancient Greece" (p. 3). Perhaps this is a

fair criticism, and in the case of Plato, it would certainly be appropriate to take the position that his leisure ideal was drastically different from the Athenian reality of leisure. However, Aristotle was an astute and empirical observer, and his ethical and political works were heavily informed and influenced by what he actually saw taking place around him (In Athens, other Athenian city-states, and other nations and cultures). Thus, we may at least partially envision the practical realities by studying his works. Certainly, it is worthwhile to study ancient Greek history to put Plato and Aristotle (and others) into perspective. However, writings passed down from common citizens (or slaves, women, children, and *metics*) are sparse. Essentially, we must rely heavily on the Greek intelligentsia (poets, philosophers, statesmen, historians, teachers) for our information. In addition, Sylvester makes a valid point in stating that the "vast majority of Athenian citizens worked for a living" (p. 13) and that the image many contemporaries have of ancient Athens (an idle, leisured body of citizens) is a misperception.

A final note on leisure studies interpretations of Aristotle. Dare, Welton, and Coe (1987) and their views on Aristotelian leisure have stood as the benchmark for others writing on the subject in the field of leisure studies. Although their intriguing attempt to marry classical leisure with Sartre's existentialism (Marxist stage) is less than satisfying, their Aristotelian interpretation concludes that leisure is essentially contemplative, a mistake we have seen often in this review of literature.[22]

[22] Cooper (1999) also utilizes Aristotelian leisure in introducing his own definition (influenced by psychological interpretations of classical writings such as Iso-Ahola's); however, Cooper is dismissive of Aristotle's position that leisure, properly used, is not necessarily useful. Cooper's explicit definition of leisure as "activity desired for its own sake" provides yet another example of misreading Aristotle. This is particularly surprising given Cooper's academic background (philosophy) but perhaps not as surprising given the purpose of his book chapter (to demonstrate that leisure studies should be taken seriously by the scientific community and to present a definition that may guide productive theorizing in leisure inquiry).

Philosophy

There are two primary pieces of scholarship in philosophy that directly address and explore Aristotelian leisure. Stocks (1936) essay (titled ΣΧΟΛΉ or *schole*) takes the position that only Aristotle's *Politics* situates leisure in a central position with philosophical significance. He also emphasizes that leisure, for Aristotle, is contemplative, and that it is available only for a select few. However, Stocks goes on to state that "self-directing, autonomous activity" (p. 181) constituted a life of leisure, and places leisure in direct opposition to slavery and slavishness. In addition, Stocks also identifies leisure with "unrestricted freedom of philosophical discourse" (p. 181).

Stocks' neglect of *NE* is certainly a mistake since it sets the conceptual stage for leisure in the *Politics*. However, Stocks general interpretation of leisure as freedom to engage activity is consistent with Aristotle's views; however, it does lean (perhaps too far) in the contemplative direction. This is illustrated by Stocks' discussion of Plato's leisure, which is much more theoretical. Stocks claims that Aristotelian leisure is "fundamentally the same as the Platonic" (p. 180). This, I think, is a mistake. Aristotelian and Platonic leisure, in one sense, are very similar, reflected by the key passage in *Theaetetus* (beginning at 172 c) where Plato identifies the philosopher as being brought up in "true freedom and leisure" (175 e) characterized by activity that has its own purpose and is not useful (in a practical sense). This echoes Aristotle as he introduces contemplation as the most noble leisure activity. However, it is different in that it omits the practical (political and ethical) dimensions of Aristotelian leisure. Thus, a move to make these two leisure philosophies synonymous is to move leisure into the purely contemplative.

The second piece of Aristotelian leisure scholarship from the discipline of philosophy is Owen (1981). Whereas Stocks' contribution is pure philosophical analysis with little practical implication, Owen, through his own philosophical analysis, argues that Aristotelian leisure (and not Platonic) can find meaning and application in a contemporary society that, in his opinion, is sorely in need of it.

Owen first makes the correct assessment of Aristotelian leisure that "necessitated work and relaxing entertainment…[as] but preparations for the ultimate function of leisure" (p. 717). This function, according to Owen, is the exercise of the intellect. However, his interpretation also reveals that leisure improperly used (in contradiction to its function) is still leisure, but is simply an abuse of it. This is consistent with my analysis; however, Aristotle's views in his physical and biological works suggest that a hand that does not fulfill its function (i.e. severed from the body) is a hand only in name (see *Generation of Animals* and *Movement of Animals*). Thus, according to this position, leisure improperly used is leisure only in name. Since Aristotle does not present these arguments in either the *Nicomachean Ethics* or the *Politics*, and because of the substantial differences between the biological works and the political/ethical works, I do not think that there is a contradiction here.

Owen also makes the connection between leisure, choice, and moral conduct,[23] consistent with Aristotle's views, as well as the analysis of Hemingway (1988). However, Owen avoids dismissing the theoretical aspects of leisure. He identifies that leisure has the ultimate function of directing the intellect toward its highest object, but he recognizes that what, exactly, this highest object is, in the writings of Aristotle, remains unclear. It may be located in "the pursuit of metaphysics, or in the self-contemplation of separate substance, or in a life of general

[23] "The intellectual life to which Aristotle directs human activity requires all the moral or practical virtues" (Owen, 1981, p. 721).

intellectual activity" (p. 722) and it is this lack of clarity (or his unwillingness to do our thinking for us) that makes Aristotle's philosophy relevant today.

Political Science

There are two primary pieces of scholarship in political science where Aristotelian leisure, while not the centerpiece of analysis, plays an important role and is worth make a few passing remarks about.

Mulgan (1990) introduces a unique interpretation of leisure as contributing to the best life. He suggests that for individuals to achieve happiness they must eventually withdrawal from the political life and its duties and obligations. However, instead of situating this withdrawal in theoretical contemplation (as many others do), Mulgan argues that individuals will find happiness in their private lives with a small number of friends and family members. Thus, leisure is social (in a limited, private way) in this context, but is not practical in any way. Therefore, in setting up this conclusion Mulgan spends a good deal of effort in conceptualizing the word political as being more social (and less formal) than contemporary definitions. While this is not entirely consistent with my interpretation of Aristotle, the argument is one that is rather difficult to refute (general philosophical activity with friends) since, as Owen (1981) pointed out, Aristotle leaves the question open as to what leisure's ultimate function is.

Bartlett (1994) argues that Aristotle's suggestion for the best regime is at best naïve and that his positions move "from the devotion to noble political action, to the priority of leisure over activity, and finally to the recognition of contemplation as the best means to secure a worthy human happiness" (p. 401). Bartlett commits two mistakes in his analysis. First, he makes the common misinterpretation that Aristotle dismisses the potential for political activity to lead to

happiness, and instead focuses on the contemplative features of Aristotle's conclusions. Second, Bartlett seems to miss Aristotle's point as to the function or purpose of leisure by suggesting that leisure is somehow a passive, contemplative, inward looking state rather than activity engaged in freedom.

Having analyzed the *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Politics,* it should be fairly clear at this point as to what Aristotle's views on leisure represent. Leisure is a condition of being free from necessity and is a necessary source (condition) for achieving human flourishing, which consists of knowledge seeking (intellectual) and social engagement (political) activities. Man is not born with innate knowledge about how to choose and engage activities that contribute to human flourishing, so education and practice are essential for utilizing leisure well.

I have provided a brief introduction, summary, and critique of a number of important works discussing Aristotelian leisure. I have identified two common mistakes in this body of literature.

First, many authors confuse the specific concept of leisure as a condition of freedom from necessity with leisure properly used according to Aristotle's views of human nature. It is important to understand that leisure is a necessary source for engaging activities that are consistent with our nature as human beings. But they must be freely chosen within the context of leisure, which suggests that we can (and do) act in ways that are sometimes consistent and sometimes inconsistent in relation to human nature.

Second, many authors lean too heavily toward a purely contemplative view of Aristotelian leisure (while a few commit the same mistake in the opposite direction). It is clear that Aristotle's broader philosophical views of human nature—that we are knowledge seekers and that we are political/social animals—requires a mixture of intellectual and political/social

activity in order to achieve human flourishing. To withdrawal from communities of men (indefinitely) for isolated contemplation is to defy human nature, according to Aristotle. Equally defiant is the abandonment of pure exercise of the intellect so that one may remain in perpetual engagement with his fellow community members. For Aristotle, the best life is a mixture or balance of the two. Since intellectual/social/political activities provide the foundation for Aristotelian leisure, it is entirely fitting that Aristotelian leisure should be perceived as showing great promise for guiding 21st century American leisure away from the isolation, alienation, and anti-intellectualism now plaguing it.

Now that Aristotle's view of leisure has been represented it is time to explore the prospects for Aristotelian leisure to find meaning and application in American communities through local government leisure service agencies. In the next chapter I provide a critical historical sketch of the origins and early practices of these agencies.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF PUBLIC RECREATION & LEISURE SERVICES

Having considered classical leisure, particularly from an Aristotelian perspective, I shall now turn to a review of the historical foundations of the public recreation movement in the United States. My purpose is first to document the significant events and changes that occurred to offer a critical perspective on this movement, determine how it has influenced current leisure service teaching, practice and philosophy, and continue my search for semblances of classical leisure ideals embedded in these practices and philosophies. In addition, references to classical leisure in this body of literature will be noted and critiqued for accuracy and consistency according to the guidelines put forth in Chapter 2. This inquiry is primarily a historical one and shall be executed through an examination of seminal texts from 1910 to the present. In selecting the texts for inclusion here I have limited the body of literature to textbooks directly addressing public leisure service provision, quasi-philosophical, book-length essays with foundational emphases, as well as a small group of historical works that detail the play movement, specifically in the first half of the twentieth century. Of particular importance is the NRPA-commissioned history of its own historical development, *Play For America: 1906-1965.*

It is worth noting my expectations as a researcher prior to embarking on this project. I have informally identified two contemporary camps that have assumed residence on contrary poles in relation to the public recreation movement in America. The first camp perceives this movement (and its major figures) as a "golden age" for recreation services before its mission and

practice were corrupted by a corporate, management-oriented vocabulary, and where excellent character and *esprit de corps* were emphasized and valued. In addition, the physical aspect of leisure and recreation was viewed as only one piece of the puzzle, leaving room for intellectual components of the concept. The general sentiment in this community-oriented camp is that leisure services began to move away from its "wholesome" origins in the 1960's. The second camp takes a very different view of the public recreation movement. The general characterization offered is one of repressive paternalism, bigotry, and slow-moving and wasteful government initiatives designed to control the citizenry. For some, the privatization of leisure services since the 1970's strikes a blow at its patriarchal foundations and in some ways liberates the citizens' leisure from government influence and dependence, while returning the primary values of leisure to the individual. For others, neither the direct delivery nor the privatizing of service offers the true rewards of leisure: freedom to act as one pleases so long as one avoids harming someone else.[24] Of course, between these two poles are many gradations, each differing from the other in subtle ways.

Given this spectrum of perceptions of the play movement in America and its supposed influence on public leisure services, I initially found myself aligned with the views of the communitarian-minded leisure scholars such as Hunnicutt, Hemingway, Sylvester, Stormann, Glover, and Pedlar, characterized by an unease with (and sometimes outright denouncing of) commercial influence in the public sector while simultaneously acknowledging the capacity for government to stifle creativity and autonomy in relation to citizens' leisure. What I had been led to believe (through reading essays such as Hunnicutt's "Our Reform Heritage: Recovering the Vision of Community Leisure Services") was that the origins of leisure services in the late 19th

[24] This emphasis on the harm principle derives from both J.S. Mill's utilitarian tradition and the more Lockean libertarianism

and early 20th centuries consisted of pure intrinsic motivations, and that the social activism driving the movement cared little for management issues such as revenue generation or the privatization of services, and harbored disdain for bureaucratic structures and practices. In addition, these scholars created a scholarly body of literature (addressed in Chapter 2 of this work) that valued the conceptualization of leisure as a classical ideal, blending the social, political, intellectual, physical, and spiritual dimensions of leisure while emphasizing self-sufficiency, freedom of choice, and the development of moral character through active citizenship. This link to classical ideals, paired with the romanticized history of the public recreation movement, has led some (Dustin & Goodale, 1999) to imply that the origins of leisure services in America resembled the ancient Greek *polis* and the philosophies of leisure that emphasized character development and virtue ethics. Thus, I expected to find many such semblances as I studied the public recreation movement without the presence of commercialized leisure and/or repressive bureaucracies. What I discovered, instead, was a picture of the play movement that was much more complex; one that was filled with both noble intentions and obvious inconsistencies, concern for the citizenry and bureaucratic in-fighting, social welfare and scrambling for resources, liberation for the citizenry and obsession with occupational advancement, sense of community and fierce individualism. I shall now turn to the history of the American public recreation movement.

The American Play Movement: the Birth of Public Leisure Services

Historically, a social movement suggests that a number of people act collectively and individually in such a way as to move toward a common goal. In the case of the American public recreation movement, the initial goal was to improve the safety, living conditions, and

future prospects for youth residing in urban areas by arranging opportunities for play, both through the development and provision of facilities, as well as the exercise of supervision and active leadership of adults. However, the public recreation movement, when considered within the broader social fabric of the late 19th and early 20th century America, was merely an extension of the progressive reform movement, with its emphasis on the "improvement of the civil service…competence, efficiency, and economy in the public service" (Hofstadter, 1962, p. 179). As we will see later in this chapter, nearly every major figure in the early public recreation movement seemed motivated by, and dedicated to, this purpose in some substantial way. However, what initially separated the recreation reformers from others (planning, public administration, law, etc…) was the lack of an established presence in higher education. For many reformers viewed institutions of higher education as vehicles for social change. However, there was no formal existence of academic curricula in higher education dedicated to the study of play and recreation[25] until decades after the first national association had been formed in the United States. Nevertheless, key figures involved in the early campaign for play, especially Howard Braucher and Joseph Lee, laid claim to expertise in this nascent field and quickly mobilized its limited resources in an attempt to act as both a national clearinghouse for information and a professional guide. Although there were other related items on the social agenda during this era, such as community centers, parks, and schools, it was the recreation and play emphasis that laid the foundations for the municipal recreation and leisure services of the current day. Thus, I now turn to the brief description and analysis of the play movement and its relation to the emergence of municipal recreation.[26]

[25] The University of Minnesota established the first recreation program in 1937.

[26] It should be noted here that NRPA commissioned a history of its organization to be written in the late 1970's (*Play for America: 1906-1965*). It is the only book length treatment of the play movement as it relates both directly and indirectly to the birth of public recreation and leisure services at the municipal level of government. This book

Since a substantial part of my essay is directed toward a constructive and meaningful critique of public recreation and leisure services as it exists today, it is essential to understand when and under what conditions they originated, since "no one can claim adequate knowledge of a subject unless one knows how such knowledge came to be" (Postman, 1999, p. 173). This is not a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon of recreation and play, activities as old as humanity, although the titles of some relevant historical texts (see Dulles' [1965] A History of Recreation: *America Learns To Play*) may increase one's knowledge of specific activities and habits that enjoyed popularity during certain eras. What is of interest here is the somewhat controversial proposition put forth by the play reformers of the early 20th century (Curtis, Gulick, Lee, Braucher, and others) that local government should assume responsibility for the direct production and delivery of recreation services for its citizenry. Once this obligation was generally accepted by local governments all over the country, with assistance from state legislators, the mission and practices evolved over time by appealing to the government and engaging in contracts with it. Moreover, recreation, unlike education, health care, and other reform targets, essentially remained organized at the local level (through the present day) rather than working its way into comparable state and federal departments.

The history of the play movement in the United States at the turn of the 20th century, or more specifically the public recreation services movement, has been detailed by a few (Rainwater, 1921; Curtis, 1914; Knapp & Hartsoe, 1979) and summarized in numerous introduction to recreation textbooks from 1940 to 2008 (e.g. Butler's [1940] *Introduction to Community Recreation*; Meyer's [1969] *Community Recreation: A Guide to its Organization*; Sessoms's [1994] *Introduction to Recreation and Leisure Services)* . This history often acts as a

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is a thorough, but predictably biased, account of the origins of NRPA. Regrettably, in the following pages I return often to this account of the play movement out of necessity for the lack of better sources, but I do so critically, recognizing that what it does not say is just as informative as what it does say.

point of departure, along with basic conceptual foundations, as readers are given quick and safe passage to more modern climates. In relaying these historical traditions, it is assumed that what exists today in regard to public recreation services was *built* firmly upon them, allowing those studying or practicing public recreation services to take some general core assumptions for granted. Of course, over time public recreation services have expanded in certain areas while gradually withdrawing from others, so expectedly, these services will look different from their distant predecessors. With such ebb and flow comes the inevitable comparisons of the past with the present, often through expressions of fondness for times and practices long gone, while others, viewing history through a more critical lens, find past recreation practices distasteful. Both may be dissatisfied with aspects of the present conditions, having been faced with new and demanding challenges, and both may be looking to the past for ideas to support their professional proposals for transitioning into the future. However, they may disagree about which direction public recreation services should move, selecting different points to support their positions. Some seem to have preferred to ignore historical foundations of public recreation services as irrelevant if not misguided, thus providing sufficient justification for striking off, unfettered by the past, in bold new directions. The other more romantic view of the past asserts that public leisure services has been derailed somewhere along the way, having gradually assumed a distorted purpose and vision, and that it should re-connect with its history so that it may recover its heritage as it moves into the future with a few good, *old* ideas (see Hunnicutt, 2000)

It is just this sort of divisiveness that currently grips public leisure services scholarship. Some (Arai & Pedlar, 1997; Glover, 2004; Hemingway,1999; Hunnicutt, 2000; Storrman, 1993) have issued forceful challenges to scholars and practitioners of public recreation services to recapture a communitarian spirit that had once thrived but was replaced by individualism and

privatization, while others (e.g., Godbey 2005) continue to emphasize the attitudes and preferences of individual consumers of public recreation services, shedding the constraints affiliated with the common good prescribed by a paternalistic government, and opting instead for a customized, unique experience. Disagreements of this nature could prove highly productive, resulting in a convergence upon a sensible middle ground. However, if neither party has a clear, unobstructed view of its professional history—a history that both have invoked as grounds for change—then the proposed future directions will be, at best, misguided. It is my view that these disagreements, as well as others, are situated on shaky historical interpretations. Since my intention is to propose change that is informed by the history of public recreation services in later chapters, the task at hand is to provide such a clear, albeit brief, historical view.

First, I locate the play and recreational services movement firmly in the broader Progressive movement, noting both movements' shared and distinct philosophical themes, but with the understanding that the play and recreational services movement existed as an extension of the more general Progressive movement. Moreover, I contend that most contemporary disagreements regarding public recreation services appeal to the history of similar, but distinct, extensions of progressive reform. Thus, invoking the history of public recreation services as grounds for substantial change when scholars and practitioners are actually invoking principles of the community center movement or educational reform (or any number of related movements), is a dubious and confusing endeavor. Second, I consult the substantial body of public recreational services textbooks, ranging from 1940 to the present, composed primarily within an academic setting for academic audiences (i.e. future public recreation professionals) to see how professional training programs for public recreation services were consistent with this

history. Third, I identify and analyze similarities and differences between the history sketched here and the classical leisure principles established in Chapter 2.

The Progressive Era *(1880's to 1920's)*

According to Wiebe (1967), "the heart of progressivism was the ambition of the new middle class to fulfill its destiny through bureaucratic means" (p. 166). Hofstadter (1955) states, "progressivism, at its heart, was an effort to realize familiar and traditional ideals under novel circumstances" (p. 215). Certainly, such efforts toward concise summarization of progressivism seem too vague. However, a careful reading of these two seminal explorations of America's quest for reform reveals a number of consistent themes.[27]

As the United States prepared to enter the 20th century, a large, educated middle class was experiencing unease and dissatisfaction regarding two important and powerful arenas of American life: the American corporation and the American government. Moreover, these two entities were often perceived as being interconnected, often displaying signs of corruption and greed at the expense of the vast majority of Americans who felt powerless and shut out. Though corporations, with their trusts and holding companies, may not have felt obligated or accountable to the American people, the democratically elected officials monopolizing local, state, and federal government could, in theory if not in practice, be reminded as to where the real political power resided. Thus, "more openness, more access, and above all more professionalism were the answers," (Rauch, 1994, p. 165) leading to a groundswell of support for government reform.

[27] It should be noted that Wiebe's *The Search For Order* is generally viewed as having improved upon Hofstadter's historical analysis of progressivism, *The Age of Reform*, although both books remain relevant today. Despite the differences in analysis, the progressive themes presented here are apparent in both works.

Theme 1: Urban/Youth Reform

The underlying argument for progressive reform—that a corrupt and wasteful government, colluding with special corporate interests, results in a corrupt, morally bankrupt, and fragmented society—was initially an urban one. The tell-tale signs of the effects of power wielding industry, coupled with dysfunctional government, were most prominent in large American cities as the nineteenth century was drawing to a close. Population density continued to increase dramatically as immigrants from Europe joined with destitute rural laborers, both white and black, in the search for jobs. As documented by Hunnicutt (1985) many of these workers spent over 60 hours per week in a workplace that was often dangerous and afforded them few, if any, rights. These workers, physically and emotionally exhausted, returned daily to family and community life with inadequate energy, enthusiasm, and interest for anything besides recuperation.[28] In addition, children often co-existed in these brutal working conditions, rather than being afforded the opportunity, through education, family, and community life, to prepare properly for adult responsibilities, and if "humanitarian progressivism had a central theme, it was the child" (Wiebe, 1967, p. 169). These conditions were in stark contrast to those found within the political monopolies and corporate boardrooms. As noted by Wiebe (1967), "America was verging on catastrophe as riches debauched one class with idleness of mind and body, while poverty sapped the vitality of the masses by overwork, bad food, and pestilent homes" (p. 69). Thus, two major areas of emphasis emerged for progressive reform at the turn of the century: the city and the child.

[28] Hunnicutt also documents the efforts by employers to discourage those employees who did have some energy after work from meeting with one another in the local pub. It was not the alcohol that was considered dangerous, but the conversations between employees.

Theme 2: Professionalism and Expertise

Progressives argued that to counter these societal ills and change an inequitable and dysfunctional system, they would need to exert pressure from outside of governmental structures, as well as penetrate and initiate change from within. For progressives, such change would not occur by occupying the corporate boardroom, but instead, through the reconstruction and utilization of city hall. Ironically, to counter the insidious influence of corporations, government would re-arrange its own structure in the corporate image and become a more complex, specialized, and active force in the community. Thus, a fundamental assumption underlying progressivism was the belief that a major function of government is solving social problems. Whereas previous generations of Americans deferred to the ideas and principles of a more rural, Christian-based morality, progressives would put Christian principles into practice[29] through a series of well informed, methodical, and rationalistic plans to improve the citizens and their communities. But the improvements envisioned by progressives were predicated upon the exertion of social control and premised more upon a faith in science and the scientific method rather than the scriptures and parables of the Bible. The hope that this newfound method and its theoretical underpinnings might somehow produce practical, real world results displayed the rational emphasis of progressive reform. The work of progressives, according to Hofstadter (1962), "was animated by the heartening sense that the gulf between the world of theory and the world of practice had been finally bridged" (p. 205).

But given the size and complexity of urban areas and their multitude of social problems, as well as the inadequate government structures in place for addressing such problems, a need for government expansion and re-structuring would be essential for progressive success.

[29] This phrase is the cornerstone of contemporary YMCA's efforts for bringing moral ideas to fruition through character development, which grew out of the initial YMCA guidance provided by Luther Gullick.

Government must become bigger, stronger, and smarter, and its policies should reflect the will of an emerging, enlightened public through the intervention of trained bureaucrats, rather than the widespread corruption of politics. According to Drazen (2000) "bureaucracy refers to a way of conducting government business" (p. 686). By increasing the size and scope of government, divisions and subdivisions of personnel and resources based upon specific content or specialty areas were required. But what features would separate the legislators from the bureaucrats that would allow for such deference to the latter? The progressive answer increasingly included professional knowledge, skills, and training, requiring the use of the pre-existing educational infrastructure: the university.

As progressives planned it, according to Hofstadter (1962), "the university would become a center of training in administration and citizenship, and would evolve into an efficient, practical servant of the state…would be wholly non-partisan…expected to serve the people as a whole, not a particular class interest…providing information, statistics, skill, and training" (p.200). Thus, a number of practice-oriented degree programs were introduced into academia that changed the way professionals were trained.[30] These included established fields such as medicine and law, as well as developing fields such as public administration, social work, and education. In addition, a common language was developing throughout these practical fields that served as an essential tool in the new emphasis on scientific method and strong inductive reasoning: statistics and probability. Thus, theory building and theory testing would inform action as reformers from diverse professions sought to change public policy, and eventually public behavior and character. In this way, progressive reformers arrived in American communities as fully informed liberators with the view that "to free the community they would have to free the nation…government would again become a function of men's everyday lives"

[30] For a discussion of what constitutes a profession, see Sessoms (1990).

(Wiebe, 1967, p. 84). Once control and power were secured by progressive experts/professionals, they could begin the long process of re-training the citizenry with the mandate of re-integrating them into the political process under the enlightened guidance of the expert. Thus, an era described by Wiebe (1967), where "trained, professional servants staffing a government broadly and continuously involved in society's operations" had arrived on the American scene.

Theme 3: Occupational Autonomy

Although many Americans had once viewed social problems from a community-centered focus, the rise of the expert introduced new ways of thinking. Specifically, the new emphasis on expertise resulted in identifying social problems along professional lines. Inevitably, certain professions will claim ownership of particular problems, as well as the right to exclusively propose and enact solutions. But because of "overlapping and conflicting functions" (Drazen, 2000, p.686), territorial disputes often arise, especially when the warring factions are competing for finite resources. Although the progressive era contains numerous examples of collaborative problem solving efforts between (and within) governmental, non-profit, and commercial entities,[31] the very nature of expertise and professionalization helped create the conditions for a competitive partitioning of society.

Theme 4: The Rise of the Lobby

As the government agency becomes segmented according to specialty area, so do the non-government groups with their requests and demands. One of the most important yet

[31] See Wiebe (1967) for his brief discussion on Jane Addams and the settlement house movement and how inter-professional collaborations occurred and were beneficial. Surprisingly, Addams, as a board member of the public recreation's national Association, did not push for more a more collaborative spirit.

controversial features of progressive era reform was the growth and refinement of lobbying activities, a phenomenon that has received little attention in the leisure studies literature. Both Wiebe and Hofstadter take note of the lobbying changes, particularly American corporations that gradually transitioned from the occasional contracting of a lobbyist to present its concerns to the government on a special case-by-case basis, to a new form of perpetual lobbying conducted by permanent, full-time lobbyists armed with vast and detailed bodies of knowledge regarding a variety of issues. Thus, the corporate board and the city/state/federal legislators begin to interact and negotiate in more complex and sophisticated ways with the assistance of their professional infrastructure: lobbyists and bureaucrats. Of course, as the progressive spirit continued to spread, common citizens and workers began to engage in organized, collective action, leading to substantial lobbying groups: trade unions and non-profit associations.

Theme 5: Experts/Professionals: Inclusive or Exclusive?

The claim of expertise generally suggests that one possesses specific skills and/or knowledge that many others do not possess or possess insufficiently. Through the acquisition of standards, accreditation, certification, and licensure, professionals create distinct boundaries between themselves and other non-professionals. Since progressive era governments were becoming more deeply bureaucratized, they risked becoming disconnected from, or inaccessible to, the citizenry—a risk that, if realized, would constitute a major reversal from its initial motivation to reform itself. Originally accused of being a disabler controlled by corporate greed, a new clean and efficient government infused with talent and a spirit of non-partisanship arrived presumably to enable its citizens, only to have its newly developed professional vocabulary disfranchise the very citizens it had hoped to liberate. According to Wiebe (1967), "experts in

administration…limited the appeal of the new values by smothering them in a private, technical language that only confused their larger audience" (p. 154). Thus, the negative connotation attached to bureaucracy began to plague the efforts of the government, a trend that persists today.

Theme 6: Climbing the Ladder of Influence: Local, State, and Federal Government

The American tendency toward reform was initially a local movement. Technological advances, although numerous, could not always remove the geographical and economic constraints of citizens. And since the progressive spirit was one of action leading to change, rather than ideas and talk, citizens took stock of their communities' problems as they moved throughout them daily and developed effective strategies, based upon access, for enacting change in those locales. However, once change took hold at the local level, many progressives took the next logical step in reform and converged on the state's political apparatus, leading ultimately to federal governmental reforms.

Having identified the recurring themes of the broader progressive era reform in the late 19th and early 20th century United States, I will now turn to one specific extension of progressivism, the public recreation movement, to explore its recurring themes and determine whether they are consistent with the broader quest for reform.

Our Reformist Heritage[32]: Themes From *Play For America: 1906-1965*

In a number of ways, the recreation pioneers of the early 20th century conform to the historical descriptions of the Progressive-type reformer of that same era. In the following pages I have identified a number of recurrent themes from the NRPA-commissioned historical account

[32] Sub-heading taken from Hunnicutt (2000) essay titled "Our Reform Heritage: Recovering the Vision of Community Leisure Service"

of the early recreation movement coinciding with its own organizational origins, while simultaneously pointing out the similarities between the recreation agenda and progressive reform. Following the path of NRPA through its own historical lens, Knapp and Hartsoe's (1979) *Play For America*, is an important exercise, given the fact that both major areas of analysis and critique in this study—public recreation services and recreation academic programs—have been (and continue to be) shaped and guided by it. Moreover, *Play For America* is a formal historical work, just as Hofstadter (1955) and Wiebe (1967) were histories. But while the latter two books have been firmly recognized over time by a wide range of respected scholars, as having made quality, meaningful contributions to the history of reform, the NRPA commissioned history has received less critical attention and scrutiny. Therefore, I have consulted *Play For America's* original sources for accuracy of content and interpretation. Specifically, I conducted a complete and detailed reading of several key original sources utilized heavily by Knapp and Hartsoe (1979): George Butler's *Introduction to Community Recreation* (1940), Henry Curtis' *The Play Movement and its Significance (1917)*, and Clarence Rainwater's *The Play Movement in the United States* (1922). Also, I consulted relevant original issues of the official publication of the public recreation profession, *Playground*, or as it later became known *Recreation* and finally *Parks & Recreation*. In addition, Lawrence Finfer's (1974) unpublished dissertation *Leisure as social work in the urban community: The progressive recreation movement, 1890-1920* represents an insightful view of the more general play and recreation movement from the progressive era and proved useful during the course of my analysis. I shall now turn to the identification and discussion of specific themes from *Play For America*.

Beyond Mere Playgrounds: Themes In the Public Recreation Movement

Theme 1: Urban/Youth Reform

Just as the more general progressive era reforms targeted the urban area and its youth, so too did the public recreation movement direct its initial efforts at societal change. Carrying the same conviction "that society could be improved if only people would act" (Knapp & Hartsoe, 1979, p. 10) into battle, progressive recreation reformers took stock of the urban decay and moral and physical fallout from industrialism. The societal problems were obvious. Children, once physically and emotionally exhausted from laboring in the factories, were now left unattended for large portions of the day following the introduction of child labor laws and compulsory education (Kleiber & Powell, 2005; Kelly, 1996). Not only were they often playing unsupervised in increasingly dangerous areas,[33] but were also acquiring a penchant for devious activities such as vandalism, theft, and gang activity.[34] The Massachusetts philanthropist Joseph Lee, often considered the single most important figure of the recreation and play movement, began to argue that play was instrumental not only in providing a healthy alternative to an unnatural urban life, but also a tool for the development of good character.[35] But identifying social problems seemed simpler than introducing proposals to solve them. In 1885, community leaders in Boston arranged for sand piles, modeled after European sand lots, to be made available for children's play (Goodale & Godbey, 1988). The success of this venture led to similar offerings in other cities, especially Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, and eventually expanded into rural areas with a service ethic targeting all ages. However, with each new project

[33] See Mike Wallace's discussion of children being killed by automobiles on residential streets in New York in director Stefan Schaefer's alternative transportation documentary *Contested Streets (2006)*

[34] See Riis, J. (1899). The genesis of the gang. *Atlantic,* September Issue, p. 304-5; and Riis, J. (1894). The making of thieves in New York. *Century,* November Issue, p. 110.

[35] See especially Lee, J. (1911). Play as an antidote to civilization. *Playground, 89*, where he seems to imply that there is no real difference between work and play—what matters is whether they produce "good." This lends a creative aspect to play, along with a moral imperative, not previously articulated.

the size, scope, and financial cost began to increase. Specifically, the assumption by the new recreation professionals, such as Henry Curtis, Luther Gullick, Joseph Lee, and Howard Braucher, that local government should subsidize and manage these new facilities and programs, began to gather momentum.

Theme 2: Governmental Responsibility and Professional Management

The initial efforts at organizing public, community-oriented recreational facilities and programs were exerted by various citizen groups and associations, with members often raising the funds (Curtis, 1917) and providing informal leadership. Just as the wider progressive reform agenda began locally and moved in a federal direction, so did the public recreation movement, only with a twist. From the perspective of public recreation advocates, the primary means of introducing and sustaining recreation in the local government structure was to *begin* with a national association that would then stimulate and assist local grassroots movements in this endeavor. Evidence of this progressive trend in reverse lies in the quantitative successes of the Association's[36] field secretaries who acted essentially as lobbyists (see Butler, 1940) that would travel to a community, consider the unique local economic and political conditions, and then implement a strategy for action for local recreation advocates, including a strong and sustained lobby of local officials.

With the establishment of a national association, The Playground Association of America (PAA) in 1906, a new emphasis on professionally trained leadership, along with a governmental commitment to directly produce and deliver recreation services, provided a firm foundation for

[36] Throughout the this chapter I use the term "Association" to refer collectively to the various stages of what is now called the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) but was previously called Playground Association of America (PAA, 1906-1911), Playground and Recreation Association of America (PRAA, 1911-1930) and the National Recreation Association (NRA, 1930-1965)

the quest for the professionalization of government subsidized public recreation. This early organization effort would truly begin charting the course for the next 100 years of public recreation education, policy, and practice under the complete control of Joseph Lee and Howard Braucher, as they assume the key positions of leadership within the Association. Their vision and resulting mandates were clear: 1) local government should be responsible for providing recreation facilities and services, 2) the concept of recreation should broaden to include a large diversity of interests, activities, and people, and 3) an independent, professional field must be developed and expanded (Knapp & Hartsoe, 1979).

Consistent with the spirit of progressivism, public recreation advocates viewed government—municipal, state, federal—as possessing potential to solve social problems. Moreover, they felt strongly that recreation could be very instrumental in this process. Thus, government would be expected to assume responsibility for addressing the social problems in their respective communities through the provision of public recreation services. And through the organizing and lobbying efforts of the new but evolving national Association, many municipal governments did indeed take responsibility for, and control of, their communities' recreation provisions, often collecting taxes as an on-going financing mechanism.[37]

What is not clear, however, are the specific arguments presented for governmental responsibility and control of recreation services. Joseph Lee's early efforts to draft enabling recreation legislation at the state level possessed no such arguments (Finfer, 1974). Only the claim of governmental responsibility is present—supporting premises are a glaring omission. Why would local governments be expected to assume the burden of producing and delivering

[37] See Butler (1940) *Introduction to community recreation* for an early chronology of municipal government participation or Shivers & DeLisle (1997) *The story of leisure: Context, concepts, and current controversies* for an updated and more complete list of early municipal recreation subsidization. For discussion of taxation for recreation generally, as well as state-enabling legislation, see Crompton (1999) *Financing and acquiring park and recreation resources*.

such services, one may ask? One answer could be that local government possessed the single most attractive resource capable of initiating and sustaining public recreation provision: its tax base. In addition, the government's authority and structure probably seemed an attractive means of organization and control, including the prospect for achieving departmental status, funding, and autonomy within municipal government. This may (partially) answer why government would be an *attractive* provider, but it still fails to answer why the government would be an *obligated* provider. Invoking the catch-all political mantra "it's all about the children,"[38] early advocates for public funding and management of playgrounds also failed to present compelling arguments justifying government involvement. This is a crucial issue and will receive more detailed attention later in this chapter.

In addition to the theme of governmental responsibility, early public recreation reformers also organized around the theme of professionalism, expertise, and management, themes not unfamiliar to the broader progressive reform movement. Once the *Playground Association of America* was formed, it began to develop in ways that would act as an exemplary administrative model for municipal recreation agencies in a variety of ways. Organizational structure, personnel, finance, policy, and research, among other things, were all considered vital aspects of a successful organization during the formative years.

Knapp and Hartsoe (1979) document the first several years of the Playground Association of America as uneven, primarily due to personality conflicts between Henry Curtis and Luther Gulick, whose previous achievements included the organization of the Public School Athletic League in New York City and a substantial role in articulating a philosophy for the YMCA (mind, body, spirit) as well as its recreation training institute (Nash, 1965), which would

[38] See Maynard (2001) *A Town At Play* for a fictional, satirical exploration of commonly used 'child rhetoric' in politics.

eventually evolve into Springfield College. It was not until 1910 that the Association would stabilize. Under new leadership provided by Joseph Lee and Howard Braucher, social worker and former seminary student, the Association established and maintained a clear and consistent vision for public recreation that has carried, nearly undiluted, into contemporary recreation services.[39] With Lee in the role of orator, public figure, and fundraiser, Braucher became the administrative force of the Association, while both collaborated on matters of policy and vision. As Knapp and Hartsoe note, "Braucher and Lee dominated formation of policy" (p. 43) and this dominance, beginning around 1909, lasted well over three decades. Consistent with the language and practice of organizational management principles of the time, Lee and Braucher issued directives regarding policy and practice with a top-down approach, and because the Association was a relatively small organization, both figures were closely involved with nearly all organizational activities and aspects. Indeed, Braucher even controlled the dissemination of knowledge for practicing professionals by assuming the role of editor of the Association's publication, *Recreation*.[40] But it was this exclusiveness, maintained over a tremendous length of time by the same individuals, that led to our next theme.

Theme 3: Professional Autonomy/Lack of Critical Self-Analysis

One strikingly evident theme emerging from the early public recreation movement was professionals' resolve to remain autonomous and independent from other professional movements of the era. Such dedication for distinguishing public recreation from other professions interested in similar social problems appears to be a difficult exercise, given the early

[39] An examination of early mission, vision, and goals literature by the *PAA* along with current ones by *NRPA* (available at nrpa.org) reveal very little substantive differences besides concern for the environment, which may be explained, in part, by the early separation of parks from recreation, as well as new scientific evidence documenting looming environmental crises.

[40] Known earlier as *Playground*, now known as *Parks & Recreation*

collaborations and influence working across professional lines (e.g. social work, education, planning). Such emphasis on exclusive professional identity leads naturally to territorial disputes, competition for scarce resources, suspicion, and avoidance of collaborations that stand in opposition to the age old cliché "two heads are better than one."

Knapp and Hartsoe (1979) document numerous proposals aimed at public recreation and its primary Association for inter-professional merging, as well as opportunities for collaborations and the sharing of resources. While the authors often present these historic episodes as recreation pioneers fighting the good fight, the underlying theme is one of an obsessive isolationism, especially on the part of its most powerful figure in the public recreation movement: Howard Braucher. For him, exclusiveness became possessiveness. While this "go it alone" attitude could be viewed as a young profession having the prerogative to find its way, I think it is more a product of the ambitions of the young educated elites (progressives) seeking public service, rather than business, as a means of carving a respectable place for themselves in a competitive culture (see Wiebe, 1967).

Besides early efforts by the National Education Association and the American Civic Association to absorb public recreation into their organizational structures, the public recreation Association provoked and accommodated a series of petty disputes with rival factions such as industrial recreation, outdoor recreation, and commercial recreation.[41] Besides these internal territorial disputes, the Association, during difficult financial times, even avoided funding opportunities through the utilization of community chest funds for fear that it would compromise their autonomy (Hartsoe & Knapp, 1979). For Braucher, even a rare collaborative success gave way to paranoia.

[41] Such professional squabbles appear in nearly all of the comprehensive historical works on the recreation movement including Curtis (1917), Rainwater (1922), and Knapp & Hartsoe (1979).

With the United States poised to enter World War I, Braucher, who had previously expressed serious reservations about involving recreation with the federal government, agreed to organize military recreation efforts under the federal banner of War Camp Community Service (WCCS). This was a result of unsettling revelations of the moral depravity of military bases and surrounding communities illustrated by "uniformed soldiers and obvious whores roaming the streets" (Knapp & Hartsoe, 1979, p. 66). A similar collaboration with the federal government would occur during the Great Depression through Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives, particularly as unemployed men were put to work building playgrounds, swimming pools, and other capital development projects in public recreation (Currell, 2005; McElvaine, 1993) as well as leadership activities in planning and delivering recreation programs.

These collaborations with the federal government allowed the public recreation movement pioneers to expand their views of recreation services as they briefly embraced the more general idea of the social community center, expressed earlier in limited form by Jane Addams' Hull House. Braucher, through the participation of the Association, enjoyed the federal recognition as being a key player in community recreation during major national and international challenges, but still wished to avoid being annexed into the federal government (see especially Chapter 7 of *Play For America)*, while simultaneously hoping to carry these temporary successes of the community center emphasis (now under an Association wing titled *Community Services)* into a long-term organizational strategy. Unfortunately, during times of national peace and prosperity, the Association saw decreased enthusiasm and participation in its new community center endeavors, and its firm resolve to remain in isolation from the broader, multi-disciplinary actions of the social center movement prevented public recreation generally from expanding as concept and as practice.

The social center movement, as described by its figurehead, Edward Ward, consisted of "a focalizing of many movements including the social settlement, civic club, community music, reading circle, library extension, university extension, industrial cooperation, and country life movements" (Farr, 2004, p. 13). The public recreation movement, through the activities of its principle professional association, was conspicuously absent.[42]

But because of the success of these endeavors, it should not have been surprising when proposals for a federal public recreation agency made their way to the United States Congress. Knapp and Hartsoe interpret Braucher's resistance to such a federal scheme as being based on the avoidance of unnecessary redundancy, since the Association (then called the National Recreation Association) viewed itself as the primary voice on public recreation matters with no need for a similar federal institution. However, Braucher's public statements and correspondence imply an underlying fear of irrelevance. In this way, Braucher fits the progressive reformer stereotype[43] discussed by Hofstadter (1955):

> Progressivism, in short, was to a very considerable extent led by men who suffered from the events of their time not through a shrinkage in their means but through the changed pattern in the distribution of deference and power.

Although these efforts toward a federal public recreation ultimately failed,[44] Braucher never seemed to find peace of mind regarding potential professional encroachment. But more importantly, the Association's failure to give earnest consideration to competing perspectives from without, while also maintaining strict exclusivity from within by placing absolute power in

[42] While it is known that the public recreation Association had a community music component for a time, it is yet another example of the recreation pioneers "going it alone" and duplicating existing services through other institutions rather than joining forces.

[43] While much of the secondary literature comparing Wiebe's (1967) and Hofstadter's (1955) analysis of progressivism suggest that Wiebe disagrees with the thesis presented above, even he recognizes the "deference from neighbors" afforded to progressives based upon their professional activity as they acquired "prestige through exclusiveness" concluding in a "revolution in identity" (p. 113).

[44] Interestingly, federal public recreation has yet to materialize in the United States, although it has in other countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom.

two[45] sets of hands, resulted in an absolute lack of critical self-analysis. Moreover, it was not only the Association that was deprived of critical scrutiny, but the public recreation movement itself received few, if any, difficult questions from the pioneers of its Association.

Theme 4: Depriving Black Americans

The United States at the turn of the 20th century, not far removed from the institution of slavery, continued to use racism "to shut out those who did not belong, not to improve those who did" (Wiebe, 1967, p. 157). While much of what is now referred to as progressive reforms failed to liberate black Americans, there was a strand of social thought and activism, led by John Dewey, that spoke out forcefully on the social injustices endured by racial minorities while calling for action founded upon "compassion and sympathy" (Farr, 2004). Particularly, Dewey leveled these social criticisms at government, accusing it of fundamentally failing its citizens.

The public recreation movement, its national Association, and its executives took notice of the plight of black Americans. Knapp and Hartsoe (1979) argue that the National Recreation Association demonstrated concern for black Americans and their recreation opportunities in their professional discussions by "cautiously promoting integration" (p. 84), despite prevailing segregationist attitudes in the United States. However, the formal introduction of a Bureau of Colored Work within the NRA's organizational structure appears to advocate a separate but equal approach to recreation service provision for blacks.[46] Certainly, no prominent public recreation figure in white America publicly demonstrated the commitment to progressive social

[45] Once Joseph Lee died, Braucher continued on unassisted in the management and administration of all aspects of the Association until he died leaving no successor. Some Association workers, in interviews with Charles Knapp, even referred to Braucher as "paternalistic and something of a dictator" (p. 44).

[46] In fact, the very name assigned to this new aspect of the Association—Bureau of Colored *Work* rather than a Bureau of Colored *Recreation*—seems to draw a line in the sand, although the efforts of Attwell, a black American, achieved amazing results for black Americans all over the country (see Butler's *Pioneers in Public Recreation,* 1965).

justice that John Dewey demonstrated, such as assisting in the formation of the NAACP and the ACLU (Westbrook, 1993). Thus, the public recreation services movement, housed in democratic government, was inclusive in theory, but exclusive in its practices.

Progressive Recreation and Progressivism In Retrospect

So what view has our brief foray into the history of public recreation afforded us? Instead of romantic notions of a social recreation provided by an unbiased and democratic government for the common good, or the pessimistic notion of recreation as a an insidious tool for social control forced upon a citizenry by an omnipresent and oppressive government, what appears to have existed at the core of the public recreation services movement was the strong desire for professional autonomy and expansion. Initial government involvement in public recreation seems to have been almost accidental. The problem of child welfare led social activists, through the strategic guidance of public recreation lobbyists, to ask their respective governments to provide safe spaces for children to play along with some minimal supervision and leadership. Armed with success stories from Boston and Chicago, playground advocates had little trouble convincing politicians, who probably viewed opposition to child welfare as politically suicidal, to become involved and commit public resources to the effort.[47]

However, once these limited, youth-oriented recreation services became a formal part of the bureaucratic government structure, they (the services) began to steadily and substantially increase their size and scope. With the guidance and assistance provided by a national clearinghouse for recreational knowledge and skills—the National Recreation Association—

[47] It is perhaps difficult in our current day to view parks and recreation as a viable political platform for politicians, however, New York City politics in the first half of the 20th century clearly demonstrate how supporting parks and recreation projects afforded numerous mayors with political armor (see especially Robert Caro (1975) *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*).

public recreation began to acquire the complex organizational form and vocabulary of the American business world with its emphasis on management and expertise. Moreover, the NRA continued lobbying local governments and educating citizens about the benefits of recreational services, which contributed to the expansion of these services giving rise to the need for more trained professional workers. This new demand for a workforce, in turn, resulted in the proliferation of academic degree programs in higher education designed specifically to produce such a workforce.[48] Having become well established, professionals sought to expand their influence by doing what is generally expected of professions; to grow. This was accomplished by increasing participation numbers, capturing larger budgets, growing their professional staffs, and erecting and maintaining massive public works projects, just as their academic counterparts sought increased full-time faculty positions, increased enrollment, larger budgets, more degree programs, dedicated facilities such as laboratories, gymnasia, and more job opportunities for their students. This quantitative emphasis was not uncommon in the progressive era, as noted by Wiebe (1967):

> Americans emphasized the obvious. What they saw about them were more tracks and more factories and more people, bigger farms and bigger corporations and bigger buildings; and in a time of confusion they responded with a quantitative ethic that became the hallmark of their crisis in values…men defined issues by how much, how many, how far (p. 40).

The consequence of this quantitative ethic in public recreation and its emphasis on professional management, when viewed historically, was a gradual erosion of the connection between public recreation services and real social problems in the community. It was social problems, specifically child welfare issues, which acted as the initial purpose and justification of

[48] Since the appearance of the first formal degree program in recreation was offered at the University of Minnesota in 1937 over 100 graduate and 600 undergraduate degree programs have been established in the United States and Canada (Cordes & Ibrahim, 2003).

government involvement in its citizens' recreation,[49] including the compulsory collection and re-distribution of private property. In addition, Dustin and Goodale (1999) note that "the emergence of undergraduate programs in parks and recreation…was at its core, a response to social needs…guided by a public service ethic" (p. 479) but that this service ethic was left behind. Hunnicutt (2000) also laments the loss of a "reform purpose or agenda" (p. 60) that once acted as the fulcrum of public recreation services.

What these eulogies, and many others, share is the assumption that the recreation pioneers established and maintained a reformist, public service ethic, but were eventually overcome by the forces of consumerism and the rise of commercial recreation. While I recognize that valid criticisms of commercial recreation exist, the suggestion that it somehow overwhelmed the public service ethic in recreation, constraining reformist tendencies, seems to miss an important point. A critical look at the history of public recreation reveals several key facts. First, as government involvement in recreation occurred, so too did commercial influence in the form of professional management. The progressive era quest for governmental reform used the American corporation—its structure, vocabulary, and tools—as a model for a new, efficient and scientifically managed government. Second, the professionalization of public recreation, with its emphasis on expertise and management, immediately created an imbalanced relationship between citizens/consumers on the one hand and government/business on the other. Third, the mandates for institutional growth and expansion, competition, and the creation and possession of a niche in the "market" were built into the organizational structure. Thus, once the wheels of professional management in public recreation were set in motion, it was only a matter

[49] Of course there have been other realms of indirect government involvement in recreation activities, such as acquisition and protection of greenspace (for environmental and aesthetic purposes), law enforcement (for the deterrence of potential and punishment of actual activity deemed unlawful), and zoning/planning/community development (for purposes of meaningful and useful physical arrangements).

of time before government services provided to the public became detached from the very problems that brought them into the initial social contract.

That is not to say that a complete disconnect exists (then or now) between public recreation and social problems in communities. Rather, it is to say that the formation of public recreation services was arranged in such a way as to allow a more market driven, demand-oriented service ethic to commingle and compete with a more traditional social problem-solving ethic. If an institution is created specifically for solving relevant social problems, then the absence of relevant social problems (or the appearance of new, unrelated social problems) will challenge the relevance and existence of said institution. Thus, an organization must find other ways of becoming relevant, or at least strategies to assist the public in perceiving it as relevant. The history of public recreation services, guided by the tenets of professionalism, has been, and continues to be, a quest for respect and relevance.

CHAPTER 4

INTELLECTUAL LEISURE AS CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Let me recount the terrain traversed thus far. A weakening of key characteristics of democracy—literacy, civic engagement, political participation—have been well documented in the United States in recent decades. Leisure, both as a concept and as a focus of practice, was presented as a relevant candidate for discussion, since it is within the context of leisure that citizens engage in (or disengage from) political participation. Specifically, classical leisure—active and broad political participation, development and exercise of the intellect—originating in the philosophical writings of Aristotle, was introduced, explicated, and critiqued. Aristotelian leisure, implying a substantial intellectual component, was presented as the guiding philosophical framework for exploring contemporary leisure services' civic and intellectual potential.

Contemporary public leisure services (and indirectly, leisure studies) has been identified as possessing democracy-strengthening potential, since it is an extension of local government that studies and guides the free-time activities of its citizenry, while making free spaces available to facilitate such activity. Although there exists in the literature a call for a return to leisure services' (and leisure studies') "reformist heritage" that celebrated Whitman's "democratic vistas" and the civic potential of classical leisure, a critical examination of the history of American leisure services in the 20th century revealed very little emphasis on intellectualism or democracy and its fundamental features—literacy, civic engagement, political participation.

Instead, we find that from the very first efforts to organize and advocate for public leisure services at the municipal level, the results have been the adoption and increasing utilization of generic principles of management (marketing, competition, organizational hierarchy, budgets, legal/risk management) and the professionalization (academic/agency accreditation standards, licensure, certification, quest for essential service designation) of leisure services. Capital development (bricks and mortar) for facilitating physical/recreational activities has been consistently pursued. Instead of democratic leisure, we found expertly supervised and managed leisure. Instead of intellectual leisure, we found an emphasis on physical activity. Thus, to envision an intellectual leisure services we must turn not to the past, but to our imaginations.

Intellectual Leisure Defined

It is clear then that there are branches of learning and education which we must study merely with a view to leisure spent in intellectual activity. – Aristotle

From Hofstadter's (1966) classic *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* to Jacoby's (2008) *The Age of American Unreason*, intellectualism has been depicted as being both unpopular and in serious jeopardy of extinction for most of the 20th century. For social critics such as Postman (1985, 1992, 1996) intellectual life and civic engagement have been undermined by technologies (television and internet) that threaten meaningful discourse by distracting and/or misleading, while for Hofstatdter (1955, 1966), reform era concerns included the unnecessary dependence by the citizen upon the expert. Wolin (1990, 2006, 2008) fears a "managed democracy" that discourages independent critical thinking and social criticism, essential tools for democratic participation, while Jacoby (2004, 2008) fears the irrational, non-secular influence creeping steadily into government since the late 1970's and "the real problem that we, as a people, have become too lazy to learn what we need to know to make sound public decisions" (p. 310).

For leisure services/leisure studies, there seems to be little concern about these alleged threats to intellectualism, although the leisure studies literature does register concerns for perceived threats to community building and the expression of citizenship within the context of leisure (see Glover 2004; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005; Pedlar, 1996; Stormann, 1993). One reason may be that the word *intellectual* hauls unnecessary baggage into the conversation, especially when paired with the concept of *classical leisure.* Public leisure service professionals and leisure service educators, both having utilized (at least to some degree) a distributive justice model (e.g. compulsory collection and re-distribution of public goods for citizens across a variety of service areas) may be doubly suspicious regarding concepts that are supposedly reserved for the elite of a community. Perhaps they have something like Plato's *Republic* in mind—a hierarchical ordering of citizens and their proper activity/function with the uneducated, laboring masses filling the basement with amusements while the educationally refined, privileged philosopher kings enjoy their leisure in contemplative repose, at everyone else's expense. But this is just the sort of misperception and misrepresentation of intellectual leisure that I hope to dispel in this chapter.

The best means of dispelling misconceptions about intellectual leisure is to provide a clear and articulate account of it. As pointed out previously, it is mostly the *intellectual* part of intellectual leisure that causes problems. Thus, I shall first present four primary attributes of intellectualism before (justifying) re-joining the leisure and citizenship components later as I explore specific intellectual leisure initiatives at the municipal level. A discussion of the relevant literature that inspired each of these initiatives will follow.

I have actively sought a conceptualization of intellectualism that presents as *essential* for active expression of citizenship within strong democratic processes. It is my contention that

classical leisure, intellectualism, and active citizenship are interconnected, and that when working in concert, exert a democracy-strengthening force.

Intellectualism

Wood (1999) argues that as the value and exercise of reason (rationality) in American culture decreases, democracy also declines. "Our entire cultural infrastructure is founded on the intellectual premise that human beings are rational and responsible enough to handle participatory self-government" (p. 17). This implies that reasoned or rational participation in the political process simultaneously produces accountability or responsibility on the part of those participating. The concept of post-intellectualism is presented as an illustration of how the breakdown of reason produces substantial obstacles for citizens to actively manage their own political affairs (a very classical, hands-on view of democracy). Specifically, knowledge seeking, critical thinking, social criticism, and broad liberal arts provide a conceptual foundation for intellectualism (see Wood, 1999, page 20).

The first attribute of intellectualism is the search for knowledge, or education (formal and informal), which plays an essential role in the development and exercise of the intellect and prepares the way for active citizenship. Political decision-making processes imply that citizens taking part are informed in some way, that they have the information they need to begin deliberations, debates, moving toward judgment of some sort. Without knowledge, citizens who engage in judgment activities (such as ballot box voting or jury service) are making arbitrary decisions. The "use it or lose it" theme for voting rights is rendered almost meaningless if there are no guiding principles or knowledge at the core[50]--it becomes an empty exercise.

[50] One excellent example of blind voting (blind judgment) is in states such as North Carolina, where elections for judges are non-partisan. Many voters are familiar with high profile candidates for the election such as President or

As Ralph Nader (2000) so eloquently stated:

> One of the strengths of a democracy is that it trusts its citizens to make intelligent choices about how they should live and be governed. But knowledge is necessary in order to make such intelligent choices and openness in government helps to achieve that end. Information is the currency of democracy

The primary difficulty with knowledge-seeking activities, as Postman (1992) and Wood (1999) note, is the exponential increase of data and information that citizens must wade through to find meaningful, comprehensible knowledge that can be effectively used to make decisions. This exercise in information-sorting requires time, solid reading/listening and comprehension skills, and access to technology (e.g. libraries, computers/internet, television, etc…). But without knowledge-seeking activity, intellectual leisure, citizenship, and democracy never quite get off the ground.

Critical thinking, the second attribute of intellectualism, as a concept and activity, is invoked frequently by educators and others who use it in a very general way to suggest a critiquing of the status quo. Postman (1999) positions critical thinking in a slightly different way, stating "education must have as one of its goals the cultivation of a skeptical outlook based on reason" (p. 159) whereas Wood (1999) simply states that rational decision-making is synonymous with critical thinking. Lipman (2007) presents the most useful definition of critical thinking, describing it as "thinking that facilitates judgment because it relies on criteria, is self-correcting, and is sensitive to context" (p. 428). These conceptualizations of critical thinking even appear similar to the standard leisure services evaluation textbook by Henderson &

Governor, but know nothing about the judges. Leaving those areas of the ballot blank are perfectly acceptable, but the statistics show that most people pick a candidate arbitrarily anyway. H & R Block now solicits donations from their NC customers in order to finance an election mailer that provides more detailed and relevant information about candidate judges.

Bialeschi (2002) and its core emphasis on "criteria + evidence + judgment = evaluation" (p. 4), a similarity I will discuss in detail in chapter 5 of this essay.

Social criticism, the third attribute of intellectualism, is an extension of critical thinking, but specifically targeting what Wood (1999) labels "our basic social arrangements…issues and long-term implications" (p. 42). This attribute was paramount in the early historical development of public leisure services (discussed in chapter 3 of this essay), evidenced by such social critics as Jane Addams and her settlement house activities, and Jacob Riis and his wielding of the pen as a journalist documenting the soul crushing conditions of the less fortunate on the New York City streets.

The fourth attribute of intellectualism, broad liberal arts, may seem an odd addition to intellectual criteria. However, Wood (1999) identifies specialization, both in knowledge and professional activity, as a counterproductive force contributing to "a loss of perspective" (p. 45) and democratic decline. In this context, the emphasis on broad liberal arts makes sense because social and political problems often consist of very complex, wide-ranging issues that require (for successful solution) breadth, rather than a specialized, narrow depth.

Now that the intellectual framework has been introduced, I will add another layer to the foundation of intellectual leisure: democratic citizenship.

Citizenship

The concept and practice of citizenship, like the critical thinking component of intellectualism, is frequently invoked and generally encouraged, and yet we often do not really know what people *mean* by it. From an American perspective, citizenship is directly related to our democratic form of government and implies membership of some sort (based upon

geographic location, time of residence, and other legal circumstances) but at this point the concept begins to undergo a broad expansion in a variety of directions. For some, citizenship has an extremely narrow definition that entails simple membership (i.e. achieving the basic requirements and approval to be considered a legal U.S. citizen), while others recognize few individual obligations (paying taxes, jury duty, obeying laws) and lots of individual rights (embodied in constitutional amendments). For others, citizenship is a full-time job (e.g. Ralph Nader) that consumes nearly all aspects (and hours) of one's day, whether it is political writing, political speaking, information gathering for political purposes, or many other sorts of direct and indirect political activities engaged in to benefit others. Regardless of the specifics of conceptualizing democratic citizenship, what becomes quickly apparent is the friction between two general emphases: the individual vs. society.

Box (2004) identifies two basic models of citizenship: *classical republican* and *classical liberal*. A republican model of citizenship "favors society over the individual" (p. 26) and is comprised of "virtuous" individuals that freely sacrifice their own personal preferences for the common good, or what Box describes as "selfless service to a greater good" (p. 26). This should imply substantial (and frequent) interpersonal activity to confirm that the common good is (and continues to be), in fact, common. However, this signals some inherent weaknesses of the *classical republican* model of citizenship. For homogeneous communities such as ancient Athens, comprised of citizens possessing, as Wolin (2004) describes, "some elementary political experience" (p. 599), acting selflessly (and competently) in accordance with the shared values and goals of one's fellow citizenry—a citizenry that resembled one another in nearly every way—the challenges are far fewer than an enormous contemporary society such as the United States, with its tremendous cultural diversity and an exponentially more complex (and globally

interconnected) political economy. How can a *classical republican* model of citizenship thrive within a large, heterogeneous population? What will protect diverse, dissenting individuals from the power of the majority?[51]

The alternative model of citizenship, *classical liberalism*, "favors individual autonomy" (Box, 2004, p. 26). From this perspective, individuals are free to blaze their own trails, and they carry with them a number of rights protected from infringement by other individuals, groups, and institutions. While diverse interests and pursuits are protected and freedom emphasized, there are a number of challenges threatening this citizen-centered view. First, as citizens develop their own unique sets of preferences and pursue their own interests, someone must tend to the short and long term planning and problem-solving required for effective democratic government. After all, a citizen is a *member* of a political authority that confers and sustains the freedoms and rights that they enjoy. But diverse individuals, in full enjoyment of their freedoms, may prefer private activities to public ones, since the private realm is often the arena for excellence and reward (as opposed to the demonstrations of excellence in the commons through the conformity of *classical republican* citizenship). Thus, the specter of a weak, vicarious political participation begins to emerge, placing decision-making power in hands that are multiple times removed from the supposed power of the people (democracy) in the forms of elected representatives and political bureaucratic structures. Moreover, if the political apparatus is successful in protecting the majority of citizens' interests (especially public safety and relative economic prosperity) then, over time, it may become less responsive to the disparities existing outside of the economically successful majority. Thus, "concentrations of wealth and power" (Box, 2004, p. 26) may begin to form. In addition, without a "common good" to guide (and unite) ordinary

[51] This is certainly not a new concern. It was a central (and contentious) question addressed by the framers of the United States constitution, and continues to prove a fertile ground for political debate in contemporary American politics.

political participation, society may experience a fragmentation into smaller, competitive groups, formed on the basis of similar self-interests, that will narrowly position themselves for the acquisition, accumulation, and/or retention of resources without a broad view of the political landscape. Among others, Dewey (1940) offers a similar critique of *classical liberalism*, although he exhibits a much greater skepticism for governmental institutions than I am willing to follow in this essay. On the more general appeal to citizen activity and awareness, Dewey is worth quoting in full:

> Unless democratic habits of thought and action are part of the fiber of a people, political democracy is insecure. It cannot stand in isolation. It must be buttressed by the presence of democratic methods in all social relationships.

My proposed model of citizenship for intellectual leisure, modeled after Wolin (2004, 2008), is one that embraces the ancient *republican* traditions of informed, active, collaborative, and frequent political participation while rejecting its exclusivist and elitist (racist and sexist) traditions. However, the cultural and economic complexity of contemporary America—an increasingly diverse and rapidly growing population, continuous economic transformations driven by multinational corporations with increasingly sophisticated tools of finance and trade, and its substantial geographical *size*— militate against a unified citizenry at the national level. This leads Wolin (2008) to conclude, "instead of *a* demos, democratic citizenries [are]…most likely to be nurtured in local, small-scale settings" (p. 291). In his view, vibrant democratic citizenship at the local level allows individuals to experience the satisfaction and "possibilities" of political participation, and may potentially make great strides toward improving democracy at the macro (state and national) level. Since this essay targets leisure services at the municipal

level (as a candidate for re-creation), the democracy-strengthening prospects of intellectual leisure appear viable.

Having introduced Wood's (1996) conceptualization of intellectualism along with Wolin's (2008) conceptualization of democratic citizenries, I have provided a foundation for intellectual leisure, a concept comprised of intellectualism, classical leisure, and citizenship. From a classical perspective, leisure celebrates the two fundamental assumptions posited by Aristotle: (1) that man is a knowledge seeker (*Metaphysics*, Book I), and (2) that man is a political animal (*Politics*, Book I), and that both (1) and (2) are intimately connected with, and depend upon, leisure. Considered together, I have concluded (in chapter 2 of this essay) that Aristotelian (or classical) leisure is not only a condition of being free from obligation for contemplative activity for its own sake, but also a condition of being free from obligation for political activity with others in the daily life of the community, both for its own sake and for its potential outcomes. Although my proposal of intellectual leisure may seem more relevant to the practical, political activities discussed by Aristotle, it seems to me that the fruits of one's contemplative activities, though not sought for the sake of other things, may prove useful *ex post facto* during the rough and tumble of daily political participation in the *polis.* That is not to say that the pleasure of exercising the mind purely for its own sake (such as Aristotle's example of ancient Egyptians' study of mathematics in *Metaphysics*) is at odds with what is presented here. Later, I will present chess as an example that fully embraces both Aristotelian categories of leisure.

Now that the theoretical and philosophical foundations for intellectual leisure are in place, I will now turn to my practical proposals for bringing the ideal of intellectual leisure to fruition in local communities, with a re-created public leisure services as a catalyst for, among

other things, "improving the quality of public discussion" (Wolin, 2008, p. 291). My vision involves public leisure service providers as change agents.

Public Leisure Services and Intellectual Leisure

Contemporary American leisure service agencies, mostly situated within municipal or county government structures, utilize professional management strategies and techniques in the development, promotion, provision, and evaluation of various leisure programs and facilities. These governmental structures are hierarchical and consist of various pieces (departments) that, in turn, are segmented further (divisions) until the organizational structure fans out along the foundation, although the complexity of the governmental structures generally, and leisure services specifically, vary according to geographical region, population, economic resources, and other factors. If one major purpose of government is to solve social problems, then government will be expected to increase, both in size and complexity, as large diverse (growing) populations with increasingly complicated problems emerge.[52] The appearance of public leisure services in the late 19th and early 20th century is an excellent example of local governments adding more pieces to the puzzle. These historical origins (discussed in Chapter 3 of this essay) were in large part a reaction to mounting social problems produced by the industrialization of America's urban centers, beginning with the provision of safe play spaces for children, resulting in new departments, programs, and facilities that previously did not exist (or existed in very limited, temporary forms as the result of private philanthropy). Thus, many municipal governments added an extra dimension to their structures.

[52] Rauch (1999) notes that regardless of the big government-small government rhetoric of the two major American political parties, the size and scope of government has grown steadily (as have the influence of lobbies), regardless of which party has been in power.

Throughout the second half of the 20th century (and into the 21st) public leisure services in the United States have continued to capture, retain, and expand financial resources (Crompton & Kaczynski, 2003[53]). What is implied here, in part, is that public leisure service agencies have presented, as Crompton (1993) notes, convincing arguments for their relevant contributions to solving social problems. However, with the widespread use of incremental budgeting by local governments (Finkler, 2001), which requires arguments only for *new* resource allocations (i.e. assuming the previous fiscal year's total operating budget moving into the next fiscal year), it is assumed that accumulated resources allocated in previous years were directed toward specific social problems and that these problems continue to persist and remain relevant. However, this tendency toward incrementalism may obstruct an agency's ability (and desire) to engage in critical self-examination because its history has been separated from the resource allocation process (i.e. no expectation to argue for its pre-existing budget). From this perspective, an agency's sense of purpose may be increasingly viewed as static, rather than a dynamic process with flexibility and responsiveness to a continuously changing community.

In addition to incremental budgeting leading to the view that leisure services, for the most part, is a settled matter, the issue of sectoral blurring (i.e. porous boundaries between public, private, and nonprofit) has been singled out in the leisure studies and public administration literature (see Box, 1998, 2004; Fain, 1991; Glover, 2004; Stormann, 1993, 2000; Slack, 1999) as having pernicious effects on community building and the active expression of democratic citizenship within the context of public leisure services. Specifically, public leisure services'

[53] The conclusions drawn in this paper were based upon U.S. Census data. When I conducted basic searches of the same data set, I could find the total number of local governments and the total parks and recreation expenditures, however, it does not show the *number* of local governments that have parks and recreation departments, and whether the recreation function may be housed with other units such as libraries, education, or public welfare. Since the arguments presented in the paper are premised on internal competition between other administrative units, the conclusion is misleading.

emphasis on generic business management principles—budgeting, marketing, personnel motivation, planning—creates more distance between the citizenry and the political power to allocate and manage public resources, a task executed daily by appointed professionals (experts) hired by elected representatives. Thus, what Stormann (2000) describes as the "inefficiency of democracy" is substantially reduced. This continued practice of managing democracy has led Wolin (2008) to describe public servants as "neutral, above politics--technocrats who would service any master" (p. 291). One may argue that this is too strong a characterization of local political agents and processes. However, the situation depicted in the literature suggests that limited, infrequent, and one-way interaction from professionals to citizens will continue to "produce apathy" (Eliasoph, 1998) regarding all things political. Having erected a wall of separation between public servants and the citizenry, professionals then turn their sights on one another.

Professionalism, combined with generic business management principles, or what Box (1998) calls the "corporate model," creates fertile ground for criticism of both public leisure services and academic leisure service programs (which I will turn to in the concluding chapter of this essay). One result of emphasizing professionalism and the corporate model in a multi-agency institution such as local government is competition, with bureaucrats pitted against one another (i.e. internal markets) by not only fighting for finite resources, but also for billing goods and services between agencies of the same institution. Since critical self-examination (at the agency level) is neither promoted nor required, professionals can go into organizational battle with confidence in their cause and clear consciences, often forgetting that their agency is just one piece in a larger, interconnected multi-piece puzzle. Competitors—police, fire, leisure services, sanitation—resemble rigid, persistent lobbying organizations that each represent good causes,

but because they consume (rather than produce) resources, they utilize strong rhetorical skills for persuading policy makers why their particular good cause is more deserving than competing good causes. Leisure services have a particular advantage in this arena of competition (similar to the public school board) because they can more easily mobilize the citizenry for their cause under the clichéd banner, "it's all about the children[54]" (Maynard, 2001). This limited interaction with the citizenry is often arranged and managed from a distance, driven by marketing mechanisms perpetrated by private organizations (with close ties to the government agency) that encourage citizens to get involved (e.g. referendum voting for a recreation and park bond or a special tax) or through the aggressive, full-time fundraising efforts of many NGO's that maintain a separate organizational existence but transfer large quantities of resources from the private to the public sector, thereby circumventing the citizenry (e.g. Riverside Park Fund and the New York City Parks and Recreation Department). But civic engagement and political participation should be more than mere special events[55] to be engaged in every four years. An active citizenry, with its preferences and desires, will resist governmental efforts to avoid the impracticality of democratic processes by making private contracts. As Chomsky (1991) has pointed out, government institutions have often been less concerned with threats *to* democracy, and more concerned with threats *of* democracy.

The challenge of intellectual leisure, as presented in this essay, is not only to create public leisure servants for democracy, but to imagine ways that these public servants can enable

[54] I suspect that the "youth development" movement in academic leisure service programs is also aware of this convenience, as they "re-position" themselves in order to capture more resources (whether it's in the community or in the academy). After all, what could be more damaging to one's cause than to be accused of hurting/not helping kids in need?

[55] Increasing student interest in the recreation/business hybrid "event management" area of study, when considered alongside the view that political participation has been reduced to a special event engaged every four years (and community forums for leisure service master plans every five years) casts further doubt on the notion that leisure services has been committed to orchestrating/enabling active, strong democratic citizenship and frequent political participation. Rojek presented a paper in May, 2009, offering a critique of event management at the University of Waterloo.

citizens to find more meaningful and frequent political participation in their communities. I now turn to the presentation of such a visioning activity, which will include the generation of social capital through informal social networks, public leisure services and its public spaces as viable third places, and the nurturing of backstage political discourse. Each of the proposals follows a guiding theme: that public leisure services should facilitate, advocate, and celebrate active, strong, democratic citizenship. This is accomplished through engaging the democratic leisure activities of reading, writing, thinking, and conversing.

Social Capital: Informal Social Connections, Places, and Conversations

The concept of social capital has attracted considerable interest from leisure scholars in recent years (see especially Hemingway & Glover's 2005 *Journal of Leisure Research* special issue on social capital). Much of this attention to social capital has been a result of Putnam's (2000) introduction of it into non-academic, non-professional areas of a wide American readership, leading even academics to critically explore the concept's historical and intellectual pedigree while developing their own contributions to the body of literature. The purpose of this portion of the essay is to explore ways in which intellectual leisure— sustained by informal social connectedness, informal political discourse, and informal, non-structured leisure (third) spaces— may act as "the guiding philosophy of…civic institutions" (Paterson, 2000, p. 33) such as public leisure services. Putnam's (2000) general conceptualization of social capital, and specific description of informal social connections, will be my guiding framework, though my emphases and conclusions will differ in subtle but important ways.

> Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks, and the norms and reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some call "civic virtue." (Putnam, 2000, p. 19).

Putnam goes on to present a number of specific dyads that constitute the more general concept of social capital, but the most fundamental of these is the formal-informal social connection distinction. He uses the Yiddish terms to symbolize and distinguish active, organized citizens (*machers*) who "make things happen in the community" from their active, less organized counterparts (*schmoozers*) who engage in "less purposeful, more spontaneous and flexible" ways (p. 93). Putnam's conclusion is that "informal connections…do not build civic skills" like their formal counterparts, but that "informal connections are very important in sustaining social networks" (p. 93). At first glance, this conclusion appears to cause few conceptual problems; however, a critical examination of this passage suggests that Putnam has needlessly undervalued and mischaracterized informal social connections.

Schmoozing's primary identifying feature, for Putnam, is informal conversation (i.e. conversation that does not necessarily "make things happen" in the community), whether it be in bars, parties, game playing, unofficial dinners, or other non-formal venues. Besides discounting the possibility of conversations, conducted in informal environs, to have formal impacts at a *later* date (i.e. using informal conversation to plant seeds that are then carried away and given opportunities to grow and produce/inspire formal actions), Putnam also misses a critical point about informal social connections generally—that the training grounds for most citizens in regard to conversation, debate, thinking aloud about issues, informal learning, and other activities required for *formal* civic engagement—are indeed developed within informal social networks. Where else, one may ask, would individuals learn (or muster the courage) to participate on the formal stage? Thus, it is Ray Oldenburg (1999) who leads us right back into the informal venues of leisure spaces: the hangout as third place.

Like Putnam, Oldenburg also documents the decline of American social connections, but whereas Putnam is more alarmed by the weakening of formal ties, Oldenburg is alarmed by the near disappearance of venues or physical spaces that nurture and sustain informal ties. Moreover, Putnam, as do many social critics, points to new technologies and the passive activities they facilitate, as the major culprit in the demise of formal civic engagement, whereas Oldenburg blames poor urban planning and design. Shape matters, according to Putnam, and "when Americans begin to grasp that lesson, the path to the planners' offices will be more heavily trod than to the psychiatrists' couches" (p. 298). In his view, what makes matters worse is an environment that resists "user modification" an essential trend in Americans' history who "took over establishments and spaces created for other purposes" (p. 287). Moreover, the internal conditions required for successful third places—neutral spaces that facilitate conversation— have been dealt a blow by cheap marketing and advertising strategies that substitute loud music and karaoke, dim lighting, and very expensive drinks for the open, well-lit, steady murmur of conversation. "Nothing more clearly indicates a third place than that the talk there is good" (Oldenburg, 1999, p. 26). Indeed, the primary benefit of frequenting third places, according to Oldenburg, is the development and exercise of conversation-making skills.

The idea of third places, and the informal conversation produced and sustained by them, seems entirely compatible with my notion of intellectual leisure. After all, citizens need "free spaces" (Evans & Boyte, 1986) for informal democratic action, and their preparations (information gathering, critical skill development) and activities (utilizing knowledge and skill to participate more meaningfully, and effectively, in one's community) will be fueled by conversation.

But there is a conspicuous absence in Oldenburg's proposal for the revival of third places in America—he gives very little consideration to public leisure service spaces and government structures (parks, community centers, libraries, city hall) as viable candidates for third places. Only a few brief, passing comments about architectural rigidity (public structures not easily changed or adapted) and conservative hours of operation (he cites libraries' typical early closing hours) are provided as justification for exclusion.[56] These hardly seem sufficient, especially in light of his stern rebukes of commercial businesses for their steep pricing of products and services. By dismissing public venues (i.e. government operated) as viable third places, Oldenburg situates third places squarely in commercial culture, but then proclaims that it was this very commercial culture (aided by government planners/zoning) that virtually eliminated third places. He also defines third places in terms of their neutrality and their role as "levelers." What better places and spaces exist for neutral, level playing fields for social interaction than government properties? Are these properties not commonly held in ownership by the citizenry? Oldenburg's reasons for dismissal must lie elsewhere.

Since free, uninhibited conversation is what allows the third place to thrive, perhaps Oldenburg's virtual silence regarding public property implies unavoidable obstacles or constraints regarding its exercise. The emphasis on political correctness in public spaces, and techniques for social control wielded by local government (e.g. loitering ordinances, indecent language prohibitions, banning of alcoholic beverage consumption, curfews, etc…) may prove stifling to the establishment of successful third places on public property. But again, these objections may be addressed and the constraints negotiated, although this process would, in all likelihood, be a gradual one that would be met with resistance.

[56] Oldenburg does identify the post office as having played a limited role as a third place in the past, before mail was delivered directly to residences and businesses, as well as cook outs at the local fire station.

One further critique that should be presented here regarding Oldenburg's arguments for the third place, given the prominent position of conversation, is what Oldenburg means by "good" conversation. On numerous occasions, he stresses the need for conversation to be playful, and describes it as "entertaining," explicitly concluding that "conversation is a lively game" (p. 29), even invoking Huizinga (1950) as expressing the "playground character of the third place" (p. 38). He states that "those who would keep conversation serious for more than a minute are…doomed to failure" (p. 37) and yet he considers third place conversation to be an example of "genuine inquiry." Certainly, frivolous chatter and petty gossip (non-serious forms of conversation, to be sure) cannot sustain the third place, but then one can imagine a "serious" conversation about the existence of God, abortion, capital punishment, and other hot-button issues conceivably destroying the third place before it even gets started. In our attempt to find a balance between competing types of conversation (for surely relegating third place conversation to the merely playful will not suit the needs of intellectual leisure) I will turn to Eliasoph (1998) who seems to advocate a middle way.

Eliasoph's (1998) masterful ethnographical exploration of the lack of meaningful and honest political discourse in civic groups creates an immediate tension between her conclusions and those of Putnam and Oldenburg, even though they share the same concerns.

In penetrating groups of school associations, environmental activists, and patrons of a country western bar, Eliasoph is interested in seeing how Goffman's (1959) arguments would hold up regarding *frontstage* (primary group communication) and *backstage* (communications conducted "out of the spotlight"), with his contention that *backstage* interaction is "regressive behavior" while *frontstage* interaction is more articulate. Surprisingly, Eliasoph found nearly the exact opposite: group interaction on the *frontstage* was clichéd, inauthentic, dogmatic, and

sometimes offensive, while interactions on the *backstage* were more honest, flexible, articulate, and sensitive. Thus, the driving question of her project—"how do citizens create contexts for political conversation in everyday life?" (p. 10)—suggests that it happens in low-key, informal places, and that this political conversation does not happen enough to support active, democratic life. Formal civic events such as educational association meetings and activists' recruitment of volunteers, Eliasoph finds, are filled with conversations directed toward immediate action, leaving many assumptions unexamined. This seems to challenge the views of Putnam and Oldenburg, a fact alluded to by Reed (2001) who reviewed Putnam (2000) and Eliasoph (1998) simultaneously.

For Putnam, the decline of widespread American participation in civic groups has decreased the "stock" of social capital available to citizens so that they may work more effectively together in areas of mutual concern. As I stated previously, Putnam is more concerned with formal social connections or *frontstage* interaction, than with the quality of the conversation itself, seeming to follow Toby Keith's suggestion for "a little less talk and a lot more action." Oldenburg, although he embraces the possibilities of the informal *backstage*, his overemphasis of physical space, while stressing playful protocol and manners, seems to prevent the honest expression of citizenship through political conversation. Eliasoph advocates the more abstract "public sphere" for developing and sustaining political conversation, instead of specific physical spaces, so in this regard, she seems fully receptive to the conversation-potential of public properties advocated in this essay. However, even she draws an unwarranted line in the sand when it comes to what sorts of citizen leaders can encourage and facilitate political conversation:

> One of the most important things that freely organized citizens' groups can do that social service bureaucrats cannot do—no matter how thoughtful, warm, and sincere those

> service workers are—is engage in imaginative, improvisational, creative political conversation. (p. 48)

Why, we may ask, are bureaucrats unable to have and/or orchestrate creative political conversations? Is it assumed that these public servants are too *professional* to have active imaginations and lack the intellectual flexibility required to be critical thinkers? Perhaps the prospects of public professionals leading (and engaging in) criticism of the institutional policies and practices that they represent *on government property* is simply too outrageous for real consideration. But this is *exactly* what my vision for a re-created public leisure services entails, and it is consistent with, and builds upon, previous leisure scholars' (Glover, 2004; Hemingway, 1999; Pedlar, 1996; Stormann, 1993) critiques of leisure services and their calls for institutional reform.

A branch of local democratic government dedicated to establishing, maintaining, and expanding free spaces for joining with the citizenry that empower (and fund) it is essential to the development and exercise of the art of informal political conversation and the free expression of citizenship. Solving social problems *together* by sharing information, knowledge, ideas, and most importantly, responsibility, is a proposal for leisure services that appears to be a reasonable proposition within the borders of the greatest democracy in the world, under the aegis of local government. If American government is willing to spend trillions of dollars spreading democracy abroad, surely it can dedicate a mere portion of its resources to spreading democracy at home.

Intellectual Leisure Services: From Ideal to Practice

I have presented a rationale for a new intellectual leisure-oriented public leisure services. Its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings—taken from political theory, political philosophy, sociology—have been guided by a general critique of public leisure services' tendency (past and

present) to assert itself as an anti-intellectual, pseudo-democratic force in local communities that emphasizes generic business management principles and professionalization as the proper means of solving social problems. It is now time to use our imaginations and present some specific, practical activities for collaboration between leisure services/servants and citizens based upon extending/re-directing traditional activities currently taking place in leisure services.

- **Provide education for citizens on government structures and how they work, and allow on-going, direct participation by citizens in leisure services budgetary planning and policy decisions.**

  Ebdon & Franklin (2004) examined municipal government's efforts to include citizens in city-wide budgeting activities. Although the results were mixed (i.e. it was unclear as to how much, if any, real influence citizens exerted in the budgetary process) the authors noted that participants felt that they had benefited by feeling empowered. Many leisure service agencies solicit public feedback and participation, but all too often (as with the Ebdon and Franklin study) it is a special event, not an on-going activity.[57] Citizen boards do provide a limited avenue for responsiveness to public concerns, but again, it takes place vicariously through elected/appointed representatives. In fact, citizen boards have the potential to become yet another layer standing between citizens and political power. Budgets are the ultimate policy documents, and policy encourages or discourages, enables or disables, certain citizen activities—budgetary policy is intended to change behavior through the resource allocation process. Thus, direct budget participation is an excellent way to partially dismantle the wall existing between citizens and professional

[57] This is especially true with comprehensive master plan activities/updates, which only occur in five or ten year increments. Note the resemblance between political participation in voting and political participation in arranged town hall meetings mentioned here. They are approached, as noted before, as special events that need to be managed utilizing various marketing strategies.

public servants. This will require some education initiatives targeting the citizens so that they may have the information and skills necessary for informed political participation. One example could be a "Government Mobile" modeled after the many libraries' "Book Mobile." This will require a fully equipped bus whose interior will be arranged with interactive displays and face-to-face learning stations addressing political structures and functions, policy center, and revolving issues of interest. All activities will follow an informal drop-in format and public leisure servants servicing the bus will act not only as information providers, but also as conversation partners. Thus, citizens learn and practice on the bus, and then attend more formal budget/policy hearings to participate as change agents.

- **Promote, develop, exercise, and celebrate conversation as the leisure activity *par excellence*, and dedicate free spaces for nurturing conversation.**

  Public leisure services and its servants must be willing to facilitate and participate in conversations with citizens without resorting to various controlling mechanisms (monologues and lectures, compulsory registration, charging participation and rental fees). Young citizens may be well served by a Kettering National Issues Forum-style program that teaches the youth to be good information gatherers/evaluators, critical thinkers, and debaters by exploring local, state, national, and global issues (but especially local issues) while learning to engage and challenge one another in respectful, meaningful ways. Many leisure services agencies have no problem dedicating large portions of their budgets for facilitating physical engagement for youth — leisure services should be challenged to give at least equal consideration for intellectual engagement.

- **Merge local government departments as a means of enhancing leisure services, rather than forcing them to compete against one another—collaboration, not competition is the theme.**

  European and Australian leisure and library scholars (Kinnell, 1994;, Snape, 1995; Divelko & Gottlieb, 2004; Brophy, 2007) have identified, explored, and advocated ways for leisure services, public libraries, museums, and schools to collaborate and/or unify. Entrenched professionalism in American leisure services (as well as "competing" agencies) is a substantial obstacle to be overcome if collaboration/unity is to become the norm rather than the exception. There are exceptional examples in the U.S. Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation has opened a new community center that includes a small branch library within its structure, while Greensboro Public Libraries have partnered with Guilford County Schools to open school libraries for public use. Joint-use agreements provide an excellent first step toward eventual unification of parks and recreation, libraries, arts centers, and museums under the banner of intellectual leisure. After all, Putnam (2003) identifies branch libraries as 'the new third place" (p. 49) with its potential to act as a free space for conversation, information gathering, and more general contemplative leisure activities.[58]

- **Public leisure service agencies must reach out to those who experience economic difficulty in obtaining leisure, and hence developing and expressing active, informed citizenship.**

[58] Visiting Seattle's newly opened Central Library in 2005—a 360,000 square foot, 11 story construction downtown—I noticed dozens of posted policies that seemed to successfully exclude homeless individuals from spending time in the library. In Greensboro's Central Library, homeless individuals have more access, but it is still a thorny issue. I fully recognize that poverty and homelessness deserves a more complete treatment, and I intend to make it a formal part of my on-going research program.

Economic inequality of the citizenry is perhaps the most challenging aspect of bringing intellectual leisure to fruition in local government. Leisure services' establishment of fees and charges schedules, as mechanisms of cost recovery, has certainly not helped matters. Fundraising and sponsorships also play large roles in many leisure service agencies. Local businesses are often a target of leisure services' sponsorship efforts in the form of youth athletic teams. Leisure services should be challenged to approach businesses, not in a quest for sponsoring organized physical recreation, but instead, for sponsoring employees' efforts to become active citizens by giving them paid time off for the development and exercise of citizenship.

- **Public leisure services must direct critical scrutiny toward new entertainment technologies and incorporate them, rather than ignoring and rejecting entertainment technologies by strictly advocating traditional, active outdoor recreation.**

  Postman (1985) argues that technologies such as television (and now internet) are here to stay, so we may as well learn how they exert influence over our lives so that we may use them in safe, meaningful ways. The leisure services field has viewed many entertainment technologies in a more limited way (see the new No Child Left Indoors initiative lobbied for by NRPA). Advocating physical exercise and a connection with nature is a very positive, worthwhile endeavor, but it cannot be the only means of addressing the increasing presence of mobile wireless technologies, satellite television and internet services, or other entertainment technologies. Doing so seems to commit the same mistake that abstinence only education does. Leisure services should be challenged to explore the ways technology shape the lives of citizens, for good and bad, through

programs designed for awareness so that citizens may utilize various technologies in ways that enhance leisure activities, especially conversation.

The promise of intellectual leisure seems great, but there are plenty of obstacles, as I have pointed out along the way, militating against it. Perhaps the greatest challenge of all is the development of intellectual leisure servants. After all, this new breed of professional must be, first and foremost, an exemplary citizen that would "combine knowledge and skill with a commitment to promoting and defending democratic values (Wolin, 2008, p. 291). Thus, I will now turn to an examination and critique of academic leisure service professional preparation programs offered by colleges and universities.

CHAPTER 5

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND INTELLECTUAL LEISURE

Civic participation is a formula for human happiness—both private and public. It is more than a duty to be self-imposed; it is a delight to be savored. Ralph Nader

In previous chapters, I have argued that American life has become increasingly fragmented and individualistic characterized by citizens' pursuit of their private conceptions of the good life, either in isolation or with others who are used instrumentally. Moreover, this tendency toward individualism has been facilitated by the liberalism of government as it emphasizes the protection of rights rather than conceptions of a common good (Halper, 2008; Sandel, 1998). This increasing individualism has also been accompanied by an increasingly anti-intellectual sentiment evidenced by a steadily decreasing literacy rate, fervent political partisanship, and passive media consumption.

I also reviewed Aristotle's conception of leisure—what it is, what purpose it serves, how it should be utilized—as a meaningful guide for contemporary American society to reconstruct a social/intellectual leisure for the 21st century in hopes of counterbalancing the rampant individualism and anti-intellectualism plaguing American society. Local government institutions such as municipal leisure service agencies and libraries are presented as essential tools for the application of this reconstructed view of Aristotelian leisure into community practice, with conversation as the leisure activity *par excellence.*

A critical examination of the history of the municipal recreation and leisure services movement in America led me to conclude that a "golden era" (displaying semblances of Aristotelian intellectual and social/political leisure) in the first few decades of the 20th century has been highly romanticized, and instead, was driven primarily by the quest for professionalism through the application of generic business management principles. I also presented a critique of the current conceptions and practices of leisure service agencies and offer an alternative conception grounded in Aristotelian leisure—development and exercise of the intellect and broad political participation—for consideration by practitioners in local government.

I shall close this inquiry on the prospects for an application of Aristotelian leisure by examining and critiquing the ways in which academic faculty explore the concept of leisure, as well as the way they train leisure professionals to go about their work in local communities.

In a critical examination of the purpose of leisure services academic programs at the end of the 20th century, Dustin and Goodale (1999) argue that these programs have slipped their "philosophical moorings." Although public leisure services in local government appeared long before formal, academic leisure services programs in higher education, their origins demonstrated a "response to social needs" (p. 478). This "public service ethic" acts as the anchor in the metaphor, and Dustin and Goodale go on to lament the field's willingness to bid *adieu* to this original sense of purpose:

> How do recreation, park, and leisure studies measure up to…a worthwhile education? It…depends on the extent to which recreation, park, and leisure studies are preparing students for a career and the extent to which they are preparing students to participate actively and responsibly in their communities. Without widespread agreement about these matters, the field is rudderless. There is nothing to guide or steer it toward a preferred future…there is little sense of a preferred future other than wanting to do whatever it takes to stay afloat. It is akin to treading water. Surely, there must be a higher purpose for the profession and its associated curricula (p. 484).

Contributing to this departure is the gradual fragmentation of leisure services at the academic level, with commercial recreation, tourism, therapeutic recreation, special events management, outdoor recreation, sports, not-for profit recreation, and a host of other sub-groups scattering in different professional directions. If these sub-groups share any common "philosophical mooring" it is the philosophy of management. I contend that intellectual leisure and its core components—democratic citizenship, classical leisure, intellectualism—are hardly visible in academic leisure services programs or their accrediting institution (NRPA).[59] Since the institution that prepares and trains students to become leisure service professionals neglects intellectual leisure, we should not be surprised to find the public leisure service agencies themselves lacking as well (as noted in previous chapters of this essay). I explore these intellectual leisure omissions in academia (as well as NRPA academic accreditation standards) and make general suggestions for re-orienting (or re-positioning) academic programs to include intellectual leisure. If intellectual leisure is to find realistic chances for practical success in communities, then educational institutions must play an active role in preparing students to become exemplary citizens rather than master business managers. As one Aristotle scholar puts it (Goodman, 2008), "Political authority is not the same as business acumen. A state is not the same sort of enterprise as a business. So the governance of human beings will not collapse into the administration of things" (p. 131).

The overemphasis of generic business management principles and professionalization in public leisure service agencies, established in the previous chapter, is reflected by the institutions of higher education that "train" students for professional careers in leisure services. While some scholars argue that academic leisure services' research activities and professional leisure

[59] NRPA accreditation standard 7.03 does state that student learning outcomes should reflect knowledge of historical and philosophical foundations of the field, but it lacks any specific histories or philosophies.

services' daily practices are independent professional paradigms (Hemingway & Parr, 2000), there is little doubt that academic leisure services' *teaching* content/activities and professional leisure services' daily practices share a similar paradigm.[60] Moreover, when academic curricula for leisure service majors are comprised of at least 20% practicum/internship activities with professional agencies,[61] it becomes difficult to distinguish between the professional and the academic.

No piece of recent leisure research better demonstrates the generic business management principles and professionalization shared between academic and professional leisure services than Hurd's (2005) "competency development for entry level public parks and recreation professionals" study. Leisure service professionals with less than five years of full-time experience were asked which competencies were essential for doing their jobs. The findings (p. 53) of this study speak for themselves: (a) business acumen; (b) communication and marketing; (c) community relations; (d) leadership and management; (e) interpersonal skills; and (f) professional skills and development.

It is difficult to determine if these newly minted leisure professionals invoke business management and professionalism because that is what they were (recently) taught in their academic training, because that is what they were (recently) oriented toward in the professional training, or a combination of the two that reinforce one another. Although this is beyond the scope of my essay, I strongly suspect, based upon the historical development of academic programs and professional agencies, that they reinforce one another. Note that my arguments in

[60] One exception is the emphasis on teaching undergraduate students research methods—a practice not required by NRPA academic accreditation standards. It is common for faculty to introduce sophisticated, graduate level statistical methods and/or qualitative observational methods, even though few students (excepting students who attend graduate school) will ever employ these methods.

[61] It is difficult to determine whether the increase in credit hours results in more professional experience. However, the increase of student credit hour production provides immediate financial consequences for the academic unit, the faculty, and the staff.

the third chapter of this essay suggest that business principles and the quest for professionalization began almost immediately with the efforts of the Association (PAA/PRAA/NRA/NRPA). Since President Franklin Roosevelt's public initiatives during the 1930's resulted in an unprecedented quantity of public works projects (many of which were parks and recreation related) the leisure services field was poised to expand, creating opportunities for academia to begin training programs not as closely tied to the initial social problems requiring the introduction of public recreation to begin with.[62]

By emphasizing management and professionalization in academic training, it is assumed that "professional managers" will possess some knowledge, skills, or abilities that distinguish them from non-professionals—a line drawn in the sand. As Parr and Lashua (2004) point out:

> A profession could be considered to have specific "cultural" knowledge of a conceptual domain that nonmembers of the culture would not share…it has been argued that "our knowledge of leisure" is what separates professionals in the field from laypersons (p. 11).

Interestingly, the authors' study concluded that no significant differences exist between non-professionals' and leisure professionals' conceptualizations of leisure. What could be the motivation for continuing to perpetuate a profession (through academic training programs) that can make no legitimate claim to a specialized body of knowledge? If knowledge is not the distinguishing feature between non-professionals and professionals, what is?

The answer is imprinted on the thematic umbrella covering the various pieces of academic leisure services programs—management. I turn now to how management and professionalism are conceptualized and advocated by academic programs and NRPA.

[62] The first leisure services academic program appeared in 1937 at the University of Minnesota (Dustin & Goodale, 1999).

Academics, Professionals, and NRPA

There are currently 90 NRPA accredited universities and colleges in the United States (www.nrpa.org). Besides national, state, and local lobbying efforts, one primary function of NRPA appears to be a bridging mechanism between professional leisure service agencies and academic leisure programs. One means of bringing academic and professionals together is the NRPA annual conference consisting of numerous educational presentations targeting practicing professionals, as well as the Leisure Research Symposium targeting academic faculty, staff, and graduate students. The organization of the conference (i.e. which sessions its attendees are directed toward) suggests that academic programs and professional agencies have very little in common.[63] This is accurate when considering research interests and activities, reward structures and expectations of the institutions funding the participants' attendance, or the recreational equipment exposition where products and services are pitched in hopes of landing sales contracts. However, an examination of NRPA accreditation standards for colleges and universities illustrate how the professional and the academic are united by the discourse of management and professionalism.

The most recent NRPA academic accreditation standards insist that "consistent consultation with practitioners shall affirm or influence the curriculum" (COA, 2008, p. 4). Professional and career advisement, professional association membership and participation, and job skill acquisition and development are important aspects leading students from academia to the workplace. Since recreation and leisure studies is a professional degree program, it makes sense to have established, practicing professionals engaging with the academic preparation

[63] When I attended the 2004 NRPA conference in Reno, NV, the practitioner sessions were held across town in a separate facility from the LRS. A cursory glance of the presentation titles and speakers demonstrate substantial differences in content and purpose between the academic LRS sessions and the practice-oriented educational sessions.

activities along the way to determine relevance and need, in other words, to help guide the training for *practice*. After all, if professional leisure service agencies and organizations refuse to hire recreation and leisure studies academic majors upon graduation, the very existence of independent recreation and leisure studies academic units become jeopardized.[64] Academic programs in recreation and leisure studies need to be perceived as relevant by professional agencies, but the relationship between academic leisure and recreation programs and professional leisure service agencies appears imbalanced, evidenced by NRPA's bridging role between the two. NRPA explicitly states:

> Accreditation has two fundamental purposes:
>
> to assure quality
> to assure improvement
>
> It cannot guarantee the quality of individual graduates or of individual courses, but it gives reasonable assurance of the context and quality of the education offered. A further benefit to the accredited program is broader recognition in the academic community and the professional field. Employers can be assured that graduates of accredited programs are fully qualified for entry level positions (www.nrpa.org/coa)

This emphasis on quality assurance suggests that NRPA *vouches* for accredited academic programs, reassuring professional agencies as they consider hiring leisure studies graduates. The possession of hiring power suggests that professional agencies hold both strategic and tactical advantages in their relationship with academic leisure studies programs (who lack such power).[65] With such pronounced imbalances, one may ask why professional leisure service agencies view academic leisure studies programs as relevant or necessary at all. Leisure service agencies will certainly not cease to exist if academic leisure studies programs were suddenly discontinued (and

[64] How many undeclared undergraduates would choose a professional degree program for their major if the job prospects are bleak or non-existent?
[65] This is substantially different from a profession like nursing. Both the health care industry and the academic nursing preparation programs need one another.

perhaps not even be inconvenienced). There are plenty of college graduates in related fields of study that may be hired so that the contemporary societal mandate of hiring a college educated workforce may be achieved. It is my view that professionalism is the primary motivating factor for professional leisure service agencies to continue the relationship with academic professional preparation programs. As long as there is general agreement on the core values (generic business management principles, vague multi-cultural mandates/political correctness, professionalism) being imparted to fresh graduates, leisure service agencies can take pride in being the "good" professional by keeping the jobs "in the family." So the status quo presents few problems for professional leisure service agencies in regards to academic programs. However, the same cannot be said for the academic programs.

The Identity Crisis of Academic Leisure Programs and its Consequences

There is an identity crisis at work in academic leisure studies programs. By identity crisis, I do not mean to suggest an intra-field jockeying for control by natural resources, therapeutic recreation, commercial recreation, or public leisure services. Instead, I am referring to two primary types of activity and resource allocation taking place in academic programs for faculty, staff and students: job preparation and research. One is student focused, while the other focuses on the individual faculty member.

As stated previously, the continued existence of academic leisure programs depends upon the job placement of their undergraduates.[66] Job placement depends, in part, on successful

[66] This also includes professional-track master's students who often come from other academic backgrounds seeking professional entry into recreation and leisure service professional agencies. My own curriculum experiences suggest little difference in content between undergraduate majors and professional-track master's students. This is why many undergraduate students are discouraged from returning to their degree granting academic unit for a master's degree—because they often have the same courses with the same instructors.

career training and preparation, and the desired content, skills, and knowledge-base consists of generic business management principles. This self-reinforcing system lacks a substantial intellectual component, but it "pays the bills" for academic units (i.e. student credit hour production). Unfortunately, this approach to undergraduate education is often quite unrelated to the reward structures and expectations of faculty and staff by the university/college institutions as a whole; a system that emphasizes the ideal of specialization in research.

Kronman (2007) documents the history of the internalized research ideal in American higher education, lamenting that:

> Those who embraced the ideal sought above all to make an original contribution to some expanding body of scholarly knowledge. This became for them the new benchmark of professional success. To succeed on these terms one had to specialize, to become an expert in some particular branch of study. Teachers who held onto the older ideal and continued to aspire to a comprehensive grasp of human knowledge were doomed to remain dilettantes in the new world of specialized research (679-681).

Thus, academic leisure programs are filled with individual faculty and staff that are expected to be creators and disseminators of specialized, intellectualized knowledge. It is the publication of research that not only creates name recognition (for the individual, the academic unit, the profession, and the university) but also produces external revenue streams through grants and contracts (see especially Tuchman [2009] for a discussion of corporate-like reward structures in American research universities). These scholarly contributions, however, are often not accessible to (and hence neither marketed to nor consumed by) practicing professionals. Moreover, the future professionals-in-training filling academic programs' classrooms are not the intended recipients of their faculty's specialized research productivity, although they are essentially financing much of it with their tuition dollars.

A situation now exists where the academic leisure program, for its continued organizational survival, must direct resources to the non-intellectual job training activities of its funding source (undergraduates/professional-track graduates) remaining responsive (and relevant) to the professional leisure service agencies' professional expectations of new graduates. Simultaneously, *individual faculty/staff* in academic leisure programs, for continued individual survival (i.e. tenure and promotion), are expected to engage in activities that rarely even relate to the education of the very students who finance this academic enterprise. That this arrangement continues to survive suggests that the unspoken non-aggression pact[67] between faculty and students is alive and well in academic leisure programs—students tolerate faculty research while faculty confer the credentials students need to get the job. Both sides achieve their aim as they tolerate the other for a brief period of time. This arrangement raises a number of troubling issues.

First, undergraduate students, in many respects, are viewed (and used) instrumentally. That is to say, they are a means (money) to an end (organizational subsistence and autonomy) for faculty and staff. In addition, the academic unit, and the individuals comprising it, are viewed (and used) instrumentally by the students for the credentials and references required to enter the workforce. Such instrumental relations prevent a mutual respect and admiration from forming between students and faculty/staff, signifying an absence of a common, meaningful bond. Rather than lead away from individualism and alienation (as proposed by Aristotelian leisure) it can only go deeper.

Second, the university reward structure for individual faculty entails the specialization of the research agenda (to increase competitiveness—knowing more and producing more than

[67] See the PBS higher education documentary *Declining By Degrees (2005)*

anyone else about one's small "plot" of knowledge). Moreover, the construction of a research agenda by leisure studies faculty often appear opportunistic (i.e. a research agenda that has good prospects for achieving tenure, promotion, professional fame, and external revenues), rather than growing out of meaningful social problems. However, with increased specialization comes less accessibility for non-experts, whether they are other faculty, students, professionals, or the greater public. Not only does the lack of accessibility exclude others through specialized language and content, it also creates an atmosphere of irrelevance and disinterest for those shut out. Undergraduate leisure majors are supposedly being trained to work in local communities, often in governmental and not-for-profit roles, which suggests they will be attempting to solve social problems. A research agenda that has this focus,[68] rather than a specialized, inaccessible one, may benefit the students, professionals, communities, and the individual faculty and staff. Again, the prospects for a common spirit of inquiry and curiosity amid the leisure studies/leisure services community, as well as the potential to solve meaningful social problems, are not enhanced by faculty specialization.

Third, by adhering to the generic business management principles approach to training/educating students in leisure studies, the leisure studies academic unit places itself in a precarious position within its wider university community. A degree program consisting of a watered down business curriculum may be perceived as lacking a unique contribution to the greater mission of the university. This sort of redundancy may be overlooked during periods of fiscal abundance, when student credit hour production is high (and there are waiting lists for entry into the business school), but during financial crises, reorganization efforts close the books on redundant, high cost programs that generate little revenue. Academic leisure studies units, by

[68] Alison Pedlar's commitment to an action research agenda is a good example of the possibilities.

using the very marketing tools and strategies that they impart to students, present a very flexible image of the program to prospective majors so that it may appeal to as many as possible. Because leisure studies is a discovery major (i.e. a major discovered once students are already admitted and enrolled in the university), substantial efforts are directed toward recruiting these students—with diverse interests, backgrounds, and expectations—that have not declared a major. These recruitment strategies follow the organizational reward structure—more majors lead to more program resources. This initiates a work-spend treadmill, not unlike Schor's (1991), where faculty recruit more students to get more resources, which in turn require more students to justify them, creating a vicious cycle of illusory progress. In today's university climate, the perception held by academic units is that programs with large enrollments lack organizational vulnerability, while those programs with small enrollments are vulnerable to rapid organizational changes. Thus, the incentives for growth are clearly recognized and the temptation to recruit "by any means necessary" can exacerbate an already ambiguous and fragmented program.

This approach to leisure education in academia stands in stark contrast to the prospects for Aristotelian leisure to find meaning and application in public leisure services. The leisure of classic Athenian democracy was made possible by a slave economy and foreign born workers, a fact that is often invoked so as to dismiss the prospects of classical leisure in contemporary society. But there is an interesting and ironic parallel between academic leisure services programs and the elitism of ancient Athens. "Many faculty…prefer teaching their specialties in graduate seminars and directing dissertations to teaching undergraduate classes and reading undergraduate papers" (Sperber, 2005, p. 133). But the reality of the academy, especially at research universities (which are emulated all the way down the Carnegie classification system), requires ever-increasing quantities of undergraduate majors, and larger class sizes, in order to

provide financial support for the intellectual interests and preferences of the faculty—a faculty who spend tremendous amounts of time creating future faculty and instilling similar professional value systems. Thus, the identity crisis is perpetuated.

Proposed Solution to the Identity Crisis of Academic Leisure Programs

In order to properly align academic leisure studies, professional leisure services, and NRPA with Aristotelian intellectual leisure, substantial changes must take place in academia.

The functional schism created for faculty by the dual mandates of 1) student career training through generic business management principles and 2) their specialized, intellectualized research activity prevents the forming and sustaining of a purposeful, consistent whole. Students, faculty, professionals, and the local community must work in concert to achieve the overall mission of intellectual leisure. However, as noted previously, the prevalent reward structures in today's university environment, both for individual faculty and for the academic unit, appear to maintain and perpetuate the schism. Therefore, one solution for addressing this issue is to transition to a new reward structure within the university organizational hierarchy that avoids this dualism.

One such transition entails the move from a degree granting academic unit that emphasizes career preparation to a student and community-centered institute that emphasizes leisure education and civic engagement, granting certificates rather than degrees. This would have several advantages over the old system of leisure studies. First, the Leisure Education and Civic Engagement Institute would be responsive to the local community (students, faculty, local professionals, citizens) rather than to a broader, abstract profession. Therefore, collaboration and on-going dialogue would be essential if local problems are to be explored and engaged effectively.

This exploration and engagement would entail teaching and research that is a direct product of the identification of local social problems instead of professional niches or trends. Second, the academic independence of such an institute (i.e. not being housed within a particular college or school[69]) will encourage true multi-disciplinary relationships. What is particularly valuable here is an opportunity for leisure studies to re-connect with the broad liberal arts (an essential facet of intellectual leisure as laid out in Chapter 4 of this essay). Recognizing that many aspects of daily living are rich in complexity and ambiguity is a hallmark of a liberal arts education, instead of the objective toolbox for efficient problem-solving prevalent in the business realm. For the Leisure Education and Civic Engagement Institute, social problems are neither simple nor easily corrected. The inefficiency of democratic processes are viewed as essential, rather than a burdensome aspect of community decision making that should be avoided when possible. Third, the introduction of an Institute for Leisure Education and Civic Engagement would resolve the organizational vulnerability issue by clearly demonstrating a unique contribution to the university mission (particularly the aspects of the mission oriented toward service to the community and student development). Because local communities surrounding universities will always have social problems to address, the institute will remain relevant as long as it continues to be aware of, and responsive to, these problems.

Although an institute of this sort will align well with the tenets of intellectual leisure and the mission of the university, there are also a number of consequences that must be considered. First, the intellectual and professional freedom enjoyed by professors, both in the classroom and in the production of research, will be necessarily constrained by the institute format. Tenure and

[69] Student Development may present the best fit for such an institute. This may also provide an excellent opportunity to re-define and re-unite leisure studies with campus recreation—an enterprise focusing primarily on physical fitness—in order to achieve a more balanced approach to recreation and leisure in the university community.

promotion will not be relevant aspects of working life in this format,[70] nor will professional advancement outside of the local environs. The teaching, research, and outreach will be interconnected and will always give primary consideration to the community as a whole. This means that the individual preferences of faculty and staff leading the institute (as well as those collaborating with it) must be explicitly consistent with the mission and objectives growing out of the community. The needs of students, citizens, and professionals (for each student is really all three) will be the focus and shall have total priority. Reading, thinking, talking, acting, and reflecting would be the order of the day, rather than political in-fighting for resources or tenure and promotion squabbles.

A second consequence of transitioning degree-granting academic units in leisure studies to a certificate-granting institute of leisure education and civic engagement will be the generation of a new relationship with NRPA. The constraints of the imposition of accreditation standards from a national association onto higher education will work against the spirit and purpose of a multi-disciplinary, non-professional leisure institute. Instead, NRPA may be invited to observe the processes and outcomes of the institute and to become an ally and sponsor. The new message from NRPA to professional leisure service agencies could emphasize desired qualities, experiences, and character of students, rather than specific credentials and general business acumen. In this scenario, newly minted graduates in history, political science, sociology, education, philosophy, and many others will be given full consideration for leisure service agency jobs. Participation in institute initiatives (including certificate achievement) paves the way for a thoughtful, diverse, and experienced citizen-professional to engage in the fresh challenges of a new community.

[70] Five year contracts can provide the security and incentive for motivating faculty and staff in the institute.

Educating a New Type of Leisure Professional

Public leisure services and academic leisure studies programs claim to share the same origins—"a response to social needs…guided by a public service ethic" (Dustin & Goodale, 1999, p. 478). However, the histories examined in this essay illustrate shared origins grounded in professionalization and social control. Intellectual leisure, critically grounded in Aristotelian principles, may become well positioned to counterbalance the isolation, individualism, and anti-intellectualism now rampant in American culture through a new arrangement of leisure education in academia which will flow out into professional leisure service agencies and the broader community. The history of community leisure services and leisure studies suggests that such a proposed reconfiguration is viable, even though it has failed more often than it has succeeded. The presentation of two prominent historical figures in the field—Jane Addams and Robert Moses (both inductees in the NRPA Hall of Fame)—exemplifies the distinguishing features between current professional training for the efficient managing of leisure (Moses) and the proposed intellectual and social enabler of leisure (Addams).

Robert Moses (1888-1981) was the most powerful parks and recreation director (and perhaps the most powerful and influential public bureaucrat) in history, coming of age during the progressive era's quest to reform government. The current cityscape of New York City—its parks, roads, bridges, public housing, tunnels, beaches, airports— is a direct result of his creative efforts.[71] That a director of city parks could create such a wide and diverse sphere of influence and involvement is a testament to Moses's business acumen and political savvy. By avoiding explicit membership and formal participation in both politics and business, Moses used the role of public servant to advance his own creative vision for the community by playing one (politics)

[71] Moses also completed numerous and substantial public works projects (including parks and recreation facilities) all over the state of New York.

off the other (business) while avoiding consultation with the very citizenry he worked for.[72] For Moses, the community (as a physical space) was a blank canvas awaiting his master brushstrokes, while members of the community were passive recipients of his expertise in governmental administration.[73] Democratic processes were too inefficient, and the diverse preferences of the masses could only bog down his organizational quest for more bricks and mortar, larger shares of resource allocations, increased dedication of professional staff lines, and greater control of broad public policy. His functional planning considerations for capital development also emphasized the physical activity of citizens, whether it was active recreational activities, travel, or domestic residence. Little if any consideration was given to intellectual and social aspects of daily urban life. In Robert Moses, the professional manager of community life had arrived.

Jane Addams (1860-1935) is one of the most widely recognized public recreation/leisure pioneers for her work in the social settlement house movement in Chicago around the turn of the twentieth century. Taking stock of poverty-stricken immigrant populations struggling to assimilate into her community, Addams applied a broad conception of leisure into practice to alter social conditions. In her view, the settlement house "is an attempt to express the meaning of life in terms of life itself, in forms of activity…the fellowship which comes when great questions are studied with the hope of modifying actual conditions" (Menand, 1997). For Addams, the role of leisure is crucial in this process and is firmly grounded in associational or community living, as members engage with one another through conversation. This novel approach to leisure aligns more with liberal arts than business:

[72] See especially Robert Caro's (1974) masterful book *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*
[73] Moses's dissertation at Columbia entailed a new civil service plan for municipal government and he attended the Training School for Public Service—he was every bit the government expert/political scientist of the era depicted by Hofstadter (1955) and Wiebe (1967).

> The chief characteristic of art lies in freeing the individual from a sense of separation and isolation in his emotional experience…accomplished…in terms of life itself (Addams, 1899).

The contrast of approaches—Moses and Addams—to conceptualizing leisure, and applying it politically, is stark. Contemporary writers of academic leisure textbooks (discussed in Chapter 3 of this essay) nearly always invoke Jane Addams when depicting the origins of the public leisure services movement, and for good reason. However, Robert Moses has yet to be mentioned in these textbooks, and it is his specific professional characteristics and values—management, professionalism, efficiency, expertise, budgets, personnel, capital development—that appear to most closely resemble the career training programs for university students aspiring to work in professional leisure service agencies. If intellectual leisure is to find meaning and application in American society generally, and professional leisure service agencies specifically, its tenets (critical thinking, knowledge seeking, meaningful social criticism, and the embrace of broad liberal arts) must be actively taken up and practiced by those in academia who are preparing the student-professional-citizen for entry into the vibrancy of community life.

The critiques and proposals put forward in this essay challenge leisure services and leisure studies to reconsider their respective roles in (and approaches to) community life. The concept of Aristotelian leisure has been identified as a foundation for reconstructing a community-based leisure that embraces, rather than avoids, political and intellectual exercise. Leisure services' historical origins document the move away from the political/intellectual and toward a professionally managed, politically neutral, and corporate-like system of leisure service provision. Since the origins of leisure studies in colleges and universities was a direct response to the widespread establishment of leisure service programs in local governments and the desire for a professionally trained work force, academic programs share many of the same flaws with

local government agencies (e.g., overemphasis of professionalism and business management principles). To correct these flaws, the reconstruction of Aristotelian leisure in communities requires leisure services and leisure studies not only to be complementary and collaborative, but to collapse into one another. Looking beyond administrative units—academic and governmental—toward the larger community will enable citizens and professionals to transcend the constraints of professionalism and assume creative control of leisure in American communities.

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