SECOND EDITION

Leisure and popular culture in transition

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Foreword

The sociology of leisure is not merely the study of the social and cultural problems faced by leisure in urban-industrial society. Ever since its inception in the United States and elsewhere, it has also, through the formulation and verification of its hypotheses, engaged in a relentless attack on the *mythical* representations of this social phenomenon. Professor Kando's new book follows in this tradition. Today, there are those who would gladly reduce leisure to those activities that are enjoyed by the individual. Such a psychologistic conception of "recreology" gives to leisure a purely subjective character. It ignores the *real* dynamics of industrial society, which produce free time and largely determine its contents. Through time budget surveys conducted in the United States, Cuba, France, and the Soviet Union, we know that at least 90% of the time freed from occupational and household work is spent on leisure activities of all sorts at all levels, not including sociopolitical and socioreligious activities. However, the freedom to choose from among leisure activities centering around the expression of collective or individual needs varies considerably. These needs are in fact conditioned by the state of the society, of its classes, and of its dominant culture.

Thomas Kando reminds us that the "leisure society" that was envisioned in advanced industrial and postindustrial societies during the 1960s rested on three social characteristics of that period:

1. A steady increase in productivity enabled us to pursue the paradox of industrial society: to produce ever more while working ever less.
2. A steady growth in the population's buying power made possible a great increase in leisure spending of the same magnitude as the growth in health care expenditures (accounting for income differences between the social classes).
3. An enthusiastic antitechnology movement had created a counterculture centering around leisure time; a cultural mutation oriented no longer toward the standard of living but toward the *style* of living.

However, the 1970s and 1980s have brought on some new conditions that alter these characteristics:

1. The rate of productivity tends to slow down, at times, even decline. The energy crisis that first cropped up in 1973 offers little cause for optimism in the short run.
2. The consumption level tends to stagnate and there is a growing number of unemployed.
3. The counterculture is no longer supported by a movement as homogeneous and dynamic as it was during the days of the beatniks and the hippies. It tends to be co-opted by the very system from which it sought to escape.

Thus the future of leisure has changed over the past twenty years. Thomas Kando's arguments against the hedonistic projections of Daniel Bell and Herman Kahn are compelling. One may only expect a *moderate* growth of time freed from occupational work by the year 2000. However, nothing indicates at the present time that the growth in leisure behavior and leisure values will come to a halt. It is true that in postindustrial economies, where the services take up a majority of the labor force (over 60% in the United States and Canada), productivity grows more slowly. It is also true that the problems of leisure will differ, depending on whether the economy remains production-oriented and wasteful of natural resources or instead slows down production so as to give way to an orientation more respectful of nature and culture. However, it would be simplistic, in either case, to expect a stagnation of productivity (the major source of added free time) to zero. Electronics, cybernetics, and automation are far from having spoken their last word, even in the tertiary sector (think of banking, education, and so forth). In addition, worktime may also be reduced by self-imposed limitations on consumption under the impact of those segments of the younger generation that value leisure as existential time. Finally, whether or not this anti-consumption movement develops, the trade unions' pressure for a reduction of the workweek remains a constant in social history, confronting the growing unemployment. Today, despite the desire for overtime among a portion of the working class and among management circles, the demand for a 35-hour workweek has spread to all unions, both in Europe and in America.

Furthermore, the social pressure for leisure comes not only from employee organizations but increasingly from a variety of social movements: the youth movement, which demands the right to independently manage time that complements or sometimes even replaces schooltime and worktime (as in the case of the dropout); the women's movement's demand for time to oneself, time distinct from household chores and family involvements; the old people's movement aimed at establishing the free activities of the third age, activities over and beyond services to and dependency on others. All these social movements tend to extract free time from time devoted to the necessities of work and to institutional involvements. Such time and existential values freed from the pressures of passive consumption and from the pains of alienated labor, values that stress the individual and collective expression of the person as the *primary* end of an activity, are these not precisely what we call leisure?

If I believe that there is no foundation to the predictions of Kahn and Wiener about leisure in the year 2000 (thirteen weeks of vacation, a generalized sabbatical year, and so on), neither can I lend more credence to the narrow predictions of Galbraith, based as they are on a purely economic analysis of a period of twenty-five years during which the length of the workweek in the United States effectively declined very little: according to Galbraith, the idea of a new age of considerably expanded leisure is actually a banal topic of conversation, one that will be used less and less by those who seek to pass themselves off as prophets of the future life.

Kando's arguments, simultaneously economic, sociological, and philosophical, pertaining to the spectacular decline of the length of the workweek since the beginnings of the industrial revolution (from 4000 hours per year to approximately 1800) and his discussion of the new values which that decline has unlocked appear to me more plausible as a basis for predicting leisure from now to the year 2000.

Each era conceals certain fundamental features of the growth of leisure, depending on

prevailing economic conditions and whether fashion dictates rosy or dark-tinted ideas. The task of sociology is to unmask these hidden characteristics. Thus at the turn of the century Thorsten Veblen showed that leisure, a class privilege, played the role of a conspicuous consumption that further reinforced social status. The rise of mass leisure during the 1950s in the United States, without abolishing social classes, placed a premium on *homo ludens* perhaps at the expense of *homo faber*. Work became gradually less sacred. The work values sung by Karl Marx and Max Weber declined. David Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd* (1948) and Rolf Meyersohn and Eric Larrabee in *Mass Leisure* (1958) underlined leisure's new importance. Today, Thomas Kando resumes the debate about contemporary leisure and its relationship to work. Following Stanley Parker and others, he asks whether postindustrial society will see work and leisure increasingly separated or, to the contrary, ever closer to each other.

To answer this question, one must first eliminate the confusion between the desirable and the probable. It would of course be desirable for the individual that the features of leisure be found in most of tomorrow's work, from the labor of construction work to the profession of educator. But is it probable? The requirements of the division of labor and the constraints of organized work do not only derive from the production ideology denounced by Herbert Marcuse and by the no-growth movement. They are *intrinsic* to the type of work required by any capitalist or socialist society for the creation of the means of life and development.

What is probable in my view is that leisure will increasingly liberate, again, the values that industrial society had eliminated during its initial stage. Thus impulses that were earlier suppressed now tend once again to find expression. For example, our relationship to our natural environment is changing. Some of the utilitarian-dominated structures are now questioned, and this benefits new existential and contemplative relationships. Our relationship to one another is changing. Some of the conventional relationships involving two or more individuals are challenged, and this leads to freer, more spontaneous and more enchanting relationships. One's relationship to oneself is changing. Some of the restrictions placed on our bodily feelings and on our sense of imagination are removed, which produces a freer and bolder search for personal happiness. From the human and social threshold now reached by the United States, leisure can no longer be viewed as a *residual* reality merely complementary to work, family obligations, and sociospiritual or sociopolitical involvements.

Leisure assumes the character of an *existential* reality. It questions constraint and obligation. Industrial society had initially sacrificed these values by doing away with traditional society. The emergence of postindustrial society tends to free once again another form, without at the same time reinstating religious control or traditional community and kinship control over rites, games, and festivals. This, in my opinion, is the chief contribution of the *cultural leisure revolution*. Despite all the economic and moral conditioning that tends to suffocate it, the leisure revolution will probably engender a profound transformation of not only work but also family obligations, routine tasks, and conforming sociospiritual and sociopolitical involvements. However, this is only a probability that depends largely on a collective consciousness expansion, social struggles, and cultural movements. It is also possible that in a flourishing capitalist society this cultural revolution, which promises the development of autonomy and creativity in all social strata, is reduced even further than today to passive "spectatoritis," conventional

vacations such as those fostered today by lucrative enterprises, and on the other hand to periodical utopian but powerless uprisings by marginal groups in quest of an alternative. I like the fact that Kando's book concludes neither with a rosy cliché nor with a black vignette of the future, but with the uncertainty of four plausible scenarios of the future of work and leisure.

I also appreciate that the author has closely associated the problems of leisure with those of *popular culture*. In 1980 this is, in my opinion, the greatest stake of mass leisure. According to Kando, popular culture is not limited to mass culture, that is, to the contents of the mass media (the printed press, film, radio, and television). It is not merely the everyday culture that an ethnologist might observe in an American suburb as he might among an Indian tribe. Kando pleads for what he calls a critical approach to popular culture. This point needs further elaboration. As I see it, popular culture is distinct from an elite culture of inventors, seekers, poets, philosophers, and their followers, who generally make up the minority of the membership of the bourgeoisie. It is first and foremost the changing culture found at the confluence of some of the contents of urban, rural, middle-class, and working-class everyday culture *and* some of the contents of an era's inventions, creations, research, and criticism. I have tried to identify in an urban setting what might be called a *living culture*. This is the cultural and social wellspring of nearly all the media's and various voluntary organizations' efforts aimed at enhancing *innovation* and *democracy* in the cultural development of all social classes.

This living culture can be seen and heard in the community. First, it is a social fact. It is socially visible. It came out of the laboratories of the scientists, the workshops of the inventors, out of the narrow circles of poets, novelists, and avant-garde philosophers where, in the mystery of creation, new ways of feeling, observing, thinking, and acting are developed. It spills over from the micromilieu of highly specialized critics into that of the metropolitan, small-town, and even rural press. It becomes the content of radio and television broadcasts and as such the object of discussion and debate among important subgroups of listeners and viewers (who are generally more numerous among the middle class than the working class). It provides ideas for conferences, information, and exhibitions to those in charge of local cultural institutions and associations. It stimulates interest and enthusiasm among recreation leaders in the schools and, more importantly, among those outside the schools, who attract, or themselves form, groups of amateurs within the institutions. They, in turn, express interest in a problem, a theme, an act, a work, or an author that appears to possess new or renewed relevance: this, then, is cultural "news," imbued as it is with the deceiving effect of fads, but it also makes possible participation in a culture that adapts to new issues, in a society whose scientific, technological, aesthetic, and ethical ideas are ever-changing as they narrowly relate to other economic, social, and political events.

Thus popular culture is a qualitative culture rather than one to be defined in limited quantitative terms. It is truly popular and not limited to the cultured segment of the ruling class. It is a creative culture with a *social life* that is unevenly spread over the different social classes. While it hits social class barriers, barriers that are as real at the level of culture as they are at the economic, social, and political level, it can nevertheless overcome them. It is a culture that can originate in traditional culture, mass culture, mass leisure, scholarly culture, or high culture. In any event, it always has the following two properties: it possesses a certain *qualitative level* and it has a wide *social distribution*. Such a

critical approach to popular culture presupposes a point of view that is both open to the "cultivation" of wide social strata and to the popularization of culture. Advanced industrial societies need a new type of academy—a popular culture academy, where creators, seekers, critics, educators, animators, and amateurs, all embodying this *double* requirement of popular culture, would guide the critical approach advocated by Kando. Here the cultural and social values of what might be termed a cultural democracy would be developed. The *Journal of Popular Culture* is one current effort in this direction. In my opinion, a *social movement* in the same direction must also emerge, a movement that would be distinct from the countless recreation, leisure, and cultural organizations that, without such a movement, run the risk of locking themselves into conventional activities that are incapable of changing life. Only a social movement centering around culture could undertake the struggle that is required to make leisure into popular creative time and not passive consumption, and from there on to transform all of life, including work, family obligations, and social obligations. Is America not, like other industrial societies, merely a society in cultural development?

Joffre Dumazedier

President and Founder,
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Preface

This second edition of *Leisure and Popular Culture in Transition* retains the book's basic objective while increasing its coverage, as suggested by some of the reviewers, and updating much of the quantitative and qualitative information about current trends in leisure and popular culture.

The aim of the book is to provide a comprehensive text for the emerging field of leisure and popular culture. As the title indicates, the conceptual area carved out differs somewhat from such established subfields as the sociology of sport, mass communications, recreation and parks, leisure studies, and popular culture. It straddles and covers portions of each of these areas because I feel that there is an underlying unity to the subject matter of those disciplines. The book attempts to bring together material that is currently dealt with in a variety of college courses in a variety of departments. While the book and most of the research used are essentially sociological, reflecting my background, the more important claim is that they are interdisciplinary. In one word the subject matter of this book is culture, with a prime emphasis on leisure.

Leisure is a modern sociological problem evolving from certain historical conditions. Furthermore, the lingering Protestant work ethic causes people to remain ambivalent toward leisure and recreation, even as their significance inevitably increases. Hence, to deal with the problem of leisure adequately, a book must do at least the following three things: (1) discuss the background history of leisure as a modern problem, (2) provide information about currently dominant recreational behavior in our society, and (3) deal with the philosophical issues involved and point to likely forms of imminent social change. Past, present, and future—this, essentially, is the framework of the book.

The book is divided into two major parts. The first five chapters are theoretical while the next five are substantive. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the book's two major themes: the history and changes in our attitudes toward work and leisure and current changes in our national consciousness and life-style. Chapter 2 reviews four key concepts in the sociology of leisure—leisure, recreation, play, and games. Chapter 3 addresses itself to the central controversy raging in this field: what do Americans do in their spare time; what are their cultural predilections; and is it true that these leave much to be desired, as critics on both sides of the Atlantic have maintained? After a conceptual discussion of popular culture and related terms, the various positions vis-à-vis the issue are presented. The conclusion reached is that whereas an elitist rejection of popular culture may be misplaced, a melioristic policy aimed at uplifting the quality of cultural, intellectual, and recreational life in

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America is nevertheless called for. Chapter 4, new to the present edition, is an overview of major approaches and empirical research findings on leisure and popular culture. This new chapter is characteristic of the way the book has changed from the first edition, in other chapters as well, namely toward greater recognition of the down-to-earth empirical work of researchers and the applied concerns of practitioners in the field.

Chapter 5 examines the question of the alleged "leisure boom." While technology has vastly increased our productivity, our purchasing power, and the potential amount of free time at our disposal, in the end, as de Grazia has stated, Americans have failed to achieve true leisure. Technology's promise was a better quality of life. The causes for the partial failure of that promise are examined. Additionally, this chapter was revised and expanded. A new section dealing with the leisure and recreation professions hopefully adds relevance to the book for college students majoring in recreation and parks and preparing themselves to become field practitioners. Finally, this chapter also reflects a change in my own perception, one prompted by changes (for the worse, I am afraid) in our economic conditions, since I first wrote the book during the early seventies. As I see it now, the enthusiastic antitechnology movement of the sixties may have been naive and premature. The promise of a leisure society was predicated on continued affluence, abundant energy supply, and further increases in economic productivity. Now that all three of these premises are in jeopardy, it is incumbent upon us to take a more cautious look at technology than did the back-to-nature counterculturists and to perhaps begin to realize the value of the material well-being it can provide. I remain in agreement with authors such as the Frenchman Jacques Ellul and the American historian Theodore Roszak that the haywire application of rational, technical, and scientific principles to human affairs more often than not dehumanizes and bureaucratizes life, limiting rather than enhancing freedom. I refer here to such tendencies as scientific psychiatry, therapeutic recreation, leisure counseling, and the scientific determination of cultural and recreational supply and demand through such techniques as Nielsen ratings and market analysis. However, economic technology is a different matter. The productivity of American industry is now alarmingly static and in some sectors, for example, mining, it has declined by as much as 5% in some years. A combination of such factors as environmental concerns, declining work ethic, and international energy shortages now threatens not only traditional American materialism but also the leisure society that had been predicted to succeed it. In sum, I raise in Chapter 5 the question of whether a wholesale rejection of material technology, moderate growth economy, business productivity, and other values currently in disrepute may not, in the end, threaten leisure itself.

The second part of the book is substantive. Chapter 6 covers high culture; Chapter 7 deals with the printed media; Chapter 8 discusses cinema; Chapter 9—newly added—covers television and popular music; and Chapter 10 is about sports, outdoor recreation, and travel. For each of these activities data are provided on the following sociological correlates: sex, age, race and ethnicity, geography, religion, values and tastes, education, occupation, and social class. In addition, each area is treated historically, and the most important issues encountered in the pertinent literature are discussed. The statistical data about each recreational activity have been updated as much as possible, and a new source of information has been tapped—the time budget study. In addition to participation frequencies and monetary expendi-

tures, amounts of time spent at various leisure activities are also provided. Also, the present edition includes some international leisure data, for example, from Canada and from Szalai's twelve-nation study. Furthermore, the issues, examples, and cultural products discussed have been updated. Popular culture is of course a highly faddish area; songs, movies, and television shows become readily passé. As an example, the extensive discussion of the hippie counterculture found in the previous edition has been eliminated.

The book closes with a postscript outlining a number of possible scenarios for the development of leisure, culture, and life-style toward the end of the twentieth century. As for the immediate future, the energy shortage, inflation, and the other rampant economic problems of our age now reveal that in a poor, crowded, and interdependent world, the affluent society is not all that affluent after all. While America has recently come through a veritable cultural revolution, reappraising traditional values and life-styles, it remains unclear to most of us what constitutes the good life. Earlier social scientists did not foresee the ecological and economic crisis of the seventies and the resurgence of the scarcity principle caused by domestic energy depletion, Third World turmoil, and overpopulation. While many predicted and advocated the advent of the leisure society, this meant at least two different prognoses: some, like Max Kaplan and David Riesman, predicted essentially that Americans would enjoy a much greater amount of traditional forms of leisure such as outdoor recreation, tourism, and other types of discretionary consumption. Others, like Sebastian de Grazia and Joseph Pieper, had visions of a more ascetic life-style and of leisure patterns along more contemplative, religious, and spiritual lines. The current crisis of Western civilization seems to give the argument to the latter group of authors insofar as spiritual leisure may be less expensive than consumptive leisure. However, nothing indicates that increasing economic hardship will cause Americans to turn from expensive and environmentally exploitative recreation to the more spiritual experiences that can be had at lower cost. In fact, history shows that the artistic and the spiritual flourish in periods of great affluence—Athens, Rome, Florence, Paris, America. This is why we must now collectively attempt to steer a course of moderation between mindless materialism and radical asceticism. In doing so, we may be able to accomplish the integration of work and leisure and a life-style that is both productive and enjoyable, both civilized and playful.

Finally, in acknowledging the help and support from which this book has profited, I can, alas, mention only a few of the many kind people who directly or indirectly contributed to the project during the three or four years of its incubation and execution. My colleagues, Bob Gliner, Jeff Hubbard, Worth Summers, and Geoffrey Watson, and reviewer John Loy all helped with ideas and criticism, as did Marcello Truzzi, Bruce Lohof, and others in their journal reviews of the first edition. Graduate assistants Jim Spencer and Tom Wilson did valuable research; secretaries Lois Hill and Caroline Schaefer's help was heroic and selfless, particularly in view of the ever-mounting budgetary assault on academic research, staff, and facilities. But most of all there is no doubt that the book would not have been written without the support of my wife, Anita.

Thomas M. Kando

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