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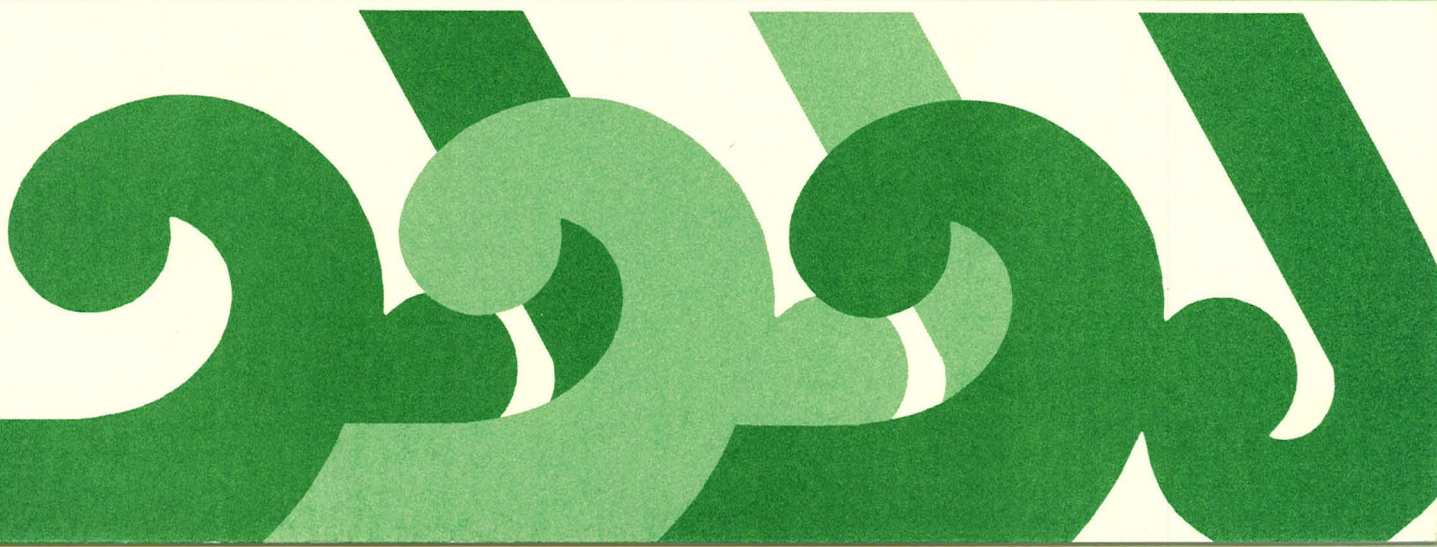
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Wellington  
New Zealand

# Recreation, Leisure and Social Policy

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O C C A S I O N A L P A P E R N O . 4



# **RECREATION, LEISURE AND SOCIAL POLICY**

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## 1. The Relevance of Recreation and Leisure to Social Policy

Recreation and leisure are rarely of central interest in political discussions of public policy, but we submit that they merit careful consideration for a number of reasons.

- *Recreation now has a place in the fabric of the social services in New Zealand.*
- Although recreation may be dismissed as being of comparatively minor economic and political significance leisure as a whole certainly can not: economically, the leisure industry is large and expanding.
- *politically*, leisure poses a number of controversial questions through its relationship to unemployment, equity and freedom.
- It can be argued that many of the concepts highlighted in the *Commission's Terms of Reference* - including social well-being, a sense of belonging to the community, opportunity to develop potential, commitment to the country's children - are primary motivators in leisure behaviour and recreation planning.

### 1.1 Concepts of Recreation and Leisure

What follows is an expansion of the points made above. It leads to a number of recommendations from our areas of expertise: leisure studies and recreation leadership education.

Although the terms, recreation and leisure, can often be used as synonyms, in this submission a distinction will be made between them for reasons discussed elsewhere (Laidler, 1985). A distinction between the terms is drawn as follows:

LEISURE is considered primarily as a condition, sometimes referred to as a stage of being, an attitude of mind or a quality of experience.

It is distinguished *by* the individual's perceived freedom to act and distinguished *from* conditions imposed by necessity.

It is assumed to be pleasurable, and although it may appeal because of anticipated benefits, it is intrinsically motivated: it is an end in itself and valuable for its own sake.

This is not to say that what the individual chooses to do will necessarily be socially constructive or so readily 'approved of' as, say, vigorous, skilful participation in sport as exercise. There may be resultant problems for those who would like to plan or provide for leisure in the fact that several of the most popular forms are associated with



television and 'just being idle', drugs (principally alcohol), gambling, sex and risk-taking.

Although leisure may be sought and found in what are conventionally described as leisure facilities, leisure time and leisure activities, it may also be experienced elsewhere, at other times and in other activities.

RECREATION is considered as activity through which leisure may be experienced and enjoyed but it is also seen as a social institution, socially organised for social purposes.

It is assumed to bring personal and social benefits and, as a result, to qualify for support from the state.

It is a means to an end and can be rationally justified.

It is tied historically to certain types of activities, especially sport, art and crafts, outdoor pursuits, hobbies, continuing education and activities with a service orientation.

Most recreation is informal, but many activities demand formal organisation within time, codes and rules, resource availability and legal provision.

Formal organisation has included the development of bureaucratic systems and professional groups with specialised skills in recreation planning and programming, community development, facility management and administration.

## **In Summary**

The terms, leisure and recreation, overlap in meaning but in this document a distinction will sometimes be made between leisure, as a quality of experience, and recreation, as a set of activities socially organised for social purposes.

## **2. Recreation in the Social Service Fabric**

There is institutional evidence that *recreation now has an established place in the network of social services* in New Zealand. It is 'legislated for' in the 1987 Recreation and Sport Act and 'provided for' in the activities facilitated by local authorities.

There is evidence too that *recreation now gives rise to questions of values and social responsibility*; it is no longer a matter merely of technical problem-solving, physical resource management, nuisance control and conflict-resolution over land.

Debates of the 1973 Recreation and Sport Bill placed strong emphasis on the potential contribution recreation can make to the 'total wellbeing of all New Zealanders', and reflected early assumptions, subsequently sustained, that recreation can be included among those *social rights and privileges*, like those defended through education and health institutions, which:

allow the citizen to share to the full in the social heritage and life of and life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society.  
(Mishra, 1977)

Such benefits to the citizen may be seen as an evolutionary extension beyond the civil, political and industrial rights won earlier in New Zealand's history, when encouragement of the citizen's self-fulfilment (social welfare) was added by degrees to guarantees of the citizen's protection (social security).

Recreation has been emerging as one of the primary social goods which 'the rational citizen wants, no matter what else he or she may want' and which 'just institutions' might be expected to provide (Rawls, 1972). Unfortunately it has been doing so at a time when the 'welfare consensus' has been waning and economic policy has been encouraging governments to reduce their welfare commitments.

At least three effects on recreation are likely to follow from this apparent opposition of economic and social preferences:

- even if opportunities for recreation are regarded as part of a new 'social wage', increasingly government will expect the private sector to create them;
- governments will be more inclined to offer 'safety nets' for groups most seriously deprived of recreation opportunities than to 'provide' and fund recreation as a common (universal) good on behalf of the community; and
- governments will be more interested in 'recreation as welfare' than in 'recreational welfare' (Coalter, 1987): that is, in recreation as an antidote to social problems of political urgency (like unemployment), rather than as a social good of such intrinsic merit that the state should facilitate not only the removal of constraints on minimal provision but also the empowerment of all groups in the community to gain access and participation.

## 2.1 Recreation at Three Levels

Both in political rhetoric and professional practice, attention has been given to the value of recreation and sport at three levels of human experience:

- *functioning and surviving biologically;*
- *functioning and developing socially; and*
- *achieving (potential, identity, expression) as a unique, creative individual.*

The combined effect of the trends noted on the previous page will be a governmental preference -- if there is to be any lead from government at all in recreation policy-making -- to be involved at the first level (functioning and surviving biologically) and to leave the other two largely to the voluntary and private sectors, to the individual citizen, to the relevant professions and to enterprises variously authorised to act in the field.

Government support might thus be anticipated for programmes of recreation and sport which are designed to improve the nation's health and fitness or to promote 'social activity organised for social ends', especially if those ends are compatible with political objectives and strategies for problem-solving (as with the 'problems' of the unemployed and 'youth at risk').

For this reason, it will be important for recreation policy-makers to be able to present and substantiate arguments that recreation can serve to combat social ills, just as at a fundamental level educational and health services tackle ignorance and illness respectively.

The most obvious problems and targets in this context seem to us to be those discussed in Section 6 and 7 and include:

- lack of fitness and wellbeing;
- lack of involvement in skilful, worthwhile activities;
- lack of involvement in group or community; and
- lack of appreciation of, care for, and access to the outdoor environment.

## 2.2 Support at Three Levels

We would not belittle the value of state support at the '*survival*' level. We also appreciate the expediency and desirability of allowing development of recreation on the other levels to take place 'at arm's length', or further, from central government.

This could, for example, encourage agents of development such as the *Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport*, professional associations and local authorities to play major roles in facilitating universal opportunities for recreation as a set of environments in which wholesome *social functioning* and development can take place.

This they might do directly through financial support for programmes, facility provision, research and leadership development and, more broadly, through their influence on policy

formulation and through co-operation with other agencies, especially those with educational, cultural and environmental responsibilities.

Such involvement would normally be oriented towards activities which could be publicly justified as leading towards socially-sanctioned ends but many of the activities would also be encouraged for their *intrinsic worth*: for the sense of achievement and commitment; for the self-expression, entertainment and celebration that they generate.

So vast is the range of public demand for this type of opportunity that it would be futile for even the most benevolent of governments to attempt to satisfy it. Not surprisingly, at this level, much provision for recreation arises in the *commercial and voluntary sectors* and from the initiative of private individuals in their private space, their private relationships and, if they can find it, their 'time to themselves'.

Provision of resources to the '*voluntary sector*' is critically important as a vast array of recreational activity springs from informal '*organisation around enthusiasms*' (Hoggett and Bishop, 1985). But support must be extended discerningly, since this major area of recreation and leisure is often misunderstood. It is hardly a sector, unified by common concerns, but rather an array of mutual aid groups for whom the activity is but one motivator among many -- often purely social -- aims. Most groups are keen to protect their independence and uniqueness from one another and from outside interference; they are wary of 'leisure evangelism' and funding schemes that might lure towards 'colonisation'. Nevertheless, many could not survive without access to public resources and the '*voluntary sector*' represents too rich a component of New Zealand's cultural life to neglect.

### 2.3 An Example of Support at Three Levels

Since the Hillary Commission is to play a leading part in the development of recreation and sport in New Zealand, it seems apt to use it to exemplify how support might be given at the three levels discussed above. (See Table below).

As an example of the applicability of the model it shows that, at the *social development* level, the Hillary Commission might be expected to put much of their energy and resources into the social and personal development of all New Zealanders through leisure and recreation activity. To this end, they would co-operate closely with relevant professional groups, concentrating on such issues as leisure education, leadership training and skill development.

## 2.4 The Complexity of Government Involvement

The difficulties of judging where and to what extent the state should become involved in recreation are apparent. Government's roles vis-à-vis recreation are diverse -- it provides, protects, patronises and prohibits; its points of contact with recreation through its own departments and portfolios are numerous. But for a government reviewing social policy against 'the standards of a fair society' there are particular dangers.

The worst of these dangers in our view are these:

- The danger of manipulating support for recreation and sport with regard to their potential political capital rather than according to principles of equity and 'fairness'.
- The danger of over-estimating the extrinsic value of certain forms and levels of recreation in which only comparatively small minorities participate and under-estimating the intrinsic values which majorities seek in their leisure.
- The danger, since recreation and sport are usually low on agendas in the business of the state, of failing to recognise the significance of changes that have made leisure much more than a minor matter for those deliberating economic and social policy. This point will be expanded in the next section.

## 3. The Economic Significance of Recreation and Leisure

### 3.1 Indicators of Size and Growth

The size and recent growth in economic activity around leisure and recreation are striking. The range of goods, services and facilities to be considered is so broad that quantification is complex, but a number of indicators, including those used in the *Government and Recreation* report (Community Services Institute, 1985), seem to point to an area of spending, investment and employment that is of considerable importance. They include the following:

The rapid growth in employment in the community, social and personal services sector, which includes the 'leisure services'. The sector now accounts for over 23 percent of total employment in New Zealand.

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**Biological Survival**
*Key issues**Strategies*

Fitness and health

To establish policy over key issues

Severe disadvantage

To co-ordinate and promote

Disability and constraint

Environmental conflict

To co-operate with other agencies

Scarcity of resources

Target groups

To provide central leadership

Equity

- policy

Welfare

- funding

- priorities

---

**Social and Personal Development**
*Key issues**Strategies*

Education

To foster the development of leadership and opportunities

Programmes

To initiate and act on research

Facilities

Leadership

Play

To open communication and information channels

Skill development

Attitudes

To co-operate with professional groups

Quality of life

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**Achievement, Expression and Celebration**
*Key issues**Strategies*

Diversity

To encourage activity at the local community level

Pluralism

To co-operate with the private and voluntary sectors

Identity

Home and 'family'

To encourage creativity and innovation

Informality

Choice

To listen to the voices of communities

Enjoyment

- Leisure and recreation (including holidays, eating out, entertainment, subscriptions to clubs and societies, hobby supplies, newspaper, magazine and recorded music purchases, gambling) accounts for more than 20 percent of all domestic spending.
- Over 14,000 people are employed in the 'recreation and culture' category of the Census of Services; a further 55,000 work in restaurants and hotels, in part servicing tourism and holiday-making.
- In 1982, over \$17 million was spent on sporting goods.
- Many of the vehicles on the roads and elsewhere are being used to facilitate recreational activity; this includes the widely-popular pastime of 'driving for pleasure'.
- Tourism is now New Zealand's second largest foreign exchange earner; it generates an estimated 68,000 jobs (and a further 30,000 in related industries). New Zealanders spend an average of 11 days a year holidaying away from home. In 1987 this contributed \$650 million to income from domestic tourism.

### 3.2 The Distribution of Recreation and Leisure

Leisure and recreation are moving from the periphery towards a more central place in the economic life of New Zealand and New Zealanders, many of whom, it is generally predicted, will continue to increase the amount of money and time they spend on such occupations in the future.

This will not, however, be the case for all New Zealanders. Many will find their leisure choices severely constrained if Government fails to reconcile a 'free market' economic policy with a social policy aimed at a 'fair distribution of the wealth and resources of the nation'. Analogies could no doubt be made with reference to 'alternative choices' in education and health care.

One of the major 'leisure problems' for governments in the imminent future is likely to be the *widening gap* between, at one extreme, those with increasing affluence, considerable freedom of leisure choice, satisfying employment and the opportunity to choose shorter working hours and working lives; and, at the other, those caught in the 'enforced leisure' and comparative poverty of unemployment or the unrelenting search for subsistence income from 'unrewarding' work.

Jamrozik (1986) predicts the growth, between these extremes, of a middle majority, restricted in their leisure mainly to 'passive activity and cultural dogmatism imposed upon it by the market and the media'. He also emphasises the significance of the issue of equity of leisure consumption for social policy. Growing inequalities in the labour market lead to growing inequalities in consumption of goods and services, in the sphere of leisure as well as in the sphere of 'necessities'.

The quality and quantity of leisure is related to a person's position in the labour market and in the socio-economic structure of a society.

Changes in the labour market have produced a situation where some people are excluded and, while they have time, their participation in leisure, especially active leisure, is limited. (Jamrozik, 1986)

### 3.3 Work and Leisure Ethics

Material limitations -- lack of discretionary income, transport, equipment -- are often exacerbated by personal disadvantages: lack of skill, self-confidence and encouragement from others.

They may also be rendered more onerous by a prevailing *ethical confusion over work*: is it obligation or privilege? If society formerly expected the citizen to earn or pay for *leisure as a 'realm of freedom'* by submission to work as a 'realm of compulsion' (Tyrrell 1983), the expectation makes little sense in moral or economic terms now that society has more would-be workers than it structurally 'needs'.

The denial of opportunities for leisure to those with little or no power or status on the labour market runs counter to social justice: if the benefits of leisure contribute to social and psychological wellbeing, opportunities for it should be fairly and universally distributed. It may also threaten social control: the 'idle unemployed' may be alienated and become disruptive.

We are not referring, moreover, to a small segment of the population. The new generation of 'structurally unemployed' is but a recent addition to a formidable list of groups (including older adults, the disabled and large numbers of 'dependent' women), who have been traditionally low in '*labour market status*' and, for that and other reasons, disadvantaged, in terms of their perception and realisation of leisure.



### 3.4 The Structural Role of Leisure

Lack of leisure in people's lives would undoubtedly raise greater public alarm if it threatened the economic structures of our society, as well as its social and cultural vitality. Lack of education, by analogy, would be more serious because, apart from its social and cultural significance, education and its institutions still function structurally to provide skilled labour to the economy and, to the individual, the motivating prospect of access to paid employment.

Leisure's structural role is obviously changing and expanding but the change is not easy to monitor. The most ambitious attempt to do so, that we are aware of, was the creation of the *Ministre de Temps Libre* in France in 1982. Concentrating its *focus on 'free time'*, the Ministry began with specific goals, like the reduction of the working-week and the extension of holiday entitlements, but its broader intent was to examine the structure and quality of unobligated time in people's lives and its potential for creative use.

If, in this context, obligations are defined as activities necessary for basic existence (including sleep) and subsistence (including work for a basic income), then 'free time' (including leisure) represents the major time component not only in the daily lives of those outside paid employment but also in the total life-span of those who complete a full career in the work force.

Self-evidently, not all 'free time' is spent 'at leisure', if the latter is characterised by enjoyment, perceived freedom and a sense of being in control, but more of it might be, if the deleterious constraints were better understood.

An investigation into the structuring of time and perceptions of its quality in various frames (work, leisure, stress, idleness, boredom, creativity) would broaden our understanding and in all probability reveal ways of broadening the range of leisure choices and the range of groups in the population who see leisure as 'an appropriate concept' in their lives.

The significance of leisure, in a micro-social perspective, grows as the small percentage of the nation's time spent in paid employment continues to diminish; it is critical at the micro-social level because it is mainly in their 'free time' that people establish, develop and enjoy their most significant social relationships.

## 4. The Political Significance of Recreation and Leisure

In the preceding sections it has been argued or implied that leisure and recreation are relevant to deliberations on social policy in several frameworks of analysis:

- In the '*social administration model*' (Coalter, 1986) the state attempts to identify 'needs', problems and gaps in the supply of social and welfare services and to make improvement through administrative reform.
- According to this model, the state could be expected to look on leisure as a residual responsibility, providing a 'safety net' if necessary but as far as possible leaving provision to the private and voluntary sectors, and to express its views mainly through negative regulation, for example over gambling, pornography and drug abuse.
- In the '*citizenship model*' it is assumed that the citizen has rights beyond entitlements to food, shelter, health care, education and disposable income; they include the right to a fair share of the social and cultural heritage, including 'civilising' opportunities for recreation and leisure.

#### 4.1 Leisure and the Capitalist State

Both models are relevant when one considers the political settings in which decisions on social policy are made. A third, classified by Coalter as *the neo-Marxist approach*, is also pertinent.

- From this view-point the state has a principal task in meeting the needs of capitalism itself: that is, reproducing the social and economic institutions that enable it to perform its two broad functions. The first of these, *accumulation of capital*, ensures production and the continuity of the market economy. The second, *legitimation*, minimises the social cost of production, legitimates the social structure and secures commitment to the system by ensuring (in combination with the private sector) that an acceptable range of goods and services (the social wage) is available for consumption. *The social wage in contemporary New Zealand embraces a number of recreation and leisure services.*
- Accumulation is usually dealt with at a strategic (national) level where there is a close link between state and capitalist interests and where the preferred *decision-making model is corporatist* (centralised power, managerialist techniques and hierarchical accountability and control).
- *At the legitimation level, social consumption (including leisure and recreation) is pluralist* and susceptible to popular pressures and fashion. It can be devolved to the local level as long as it creates little threat to existing political or business power structures.

Ideological leanings obviously influence political decision-makers: do they regard the 'leisure services' as 'social welfare' to be dispensed through rational and technical (problem-solving) *social administration*? Is leisure a *social 'right'*? Where does leisure stand in relation to the corporate systems of the 'accumulating' capitalist state? In contrast, is the individual citizen in danger of exploitation by the political forces maintaining *social control* ('legitimation') and the commercial forces transforming leisure pluralism into a widening market for the sale of '*leisure commodities*'?

These questions do not remain buried in theoretical analysis; they surface in social reality.

In current contexts, the prominence of the questions just raised can be illustrated by reference to:

- *professional groups* planning and providing for recreation; and
- some of the groups regarded as *target problems* because they are 'recreationally disadvantaged'.

#### 4.2 Professional Orientation: Pluralism or Corporatism?

If the state requires its recreation professionals to foster universality of access and diversity of opportunity, it may have to act to control policy ambiguity and apparent polarisation: between the; 'deals' associated with leisure and the 'images' associated with its commercialisation and 'commodification'. Some of the 'poles' have been identified (Benington & White, 1986) as these:

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<i>Ideals</i>	<i>Images</i>
Active participation	Passive consumption
Variety and diversity	Standardisation
Creative productivity	Mass produced 'leisure'
Social community	Separated privatisation
The 'live'	The synthetic
Judgement by quality	Judgement by quantity (for example, audience ratings)
Priorities dictated by needs	Priorities dictated by commercial criteria
Co-operative values	Competitive values

---

This polarisation creates most ambivalence for the professional who is caught between two sets of expectations: *to manage physical and financial resources* efficiently by corporatist criteria applied inside heirarchical, bureaucratic and centralised systems of accountability; or

to '*animate*' the human resourcefulness expressed through leisure behaviour and to ease some of the constraints that inhibit it.

At best, the two stereotypes just mentioned can be reconciled but there are signs that they are being pushed apart. The '*animateurs*' are likely to be working in the public sector, part-time or on short-term contract, poorly paid and without 'career prospects'. Their interest in community development will bring them into close contact with local groups some of whom, labelled as underprivileged, are not normally involved in formal recreation and sport, and are the first to be eliminated as the 'user pays' principle is more widely adopted. The *animateur* who assumes the mantle of social activist will frequently find herself or himself in conflict with employing authorities.

*Managers* in private and commercial settings can expect better employment prospects. Their orientation will be more towards market forces than social change; more towards social planning than social action; more towards corporatisation in delivery systems than pluralism in public participation.

In the interests of social justice, it would be unfortunate if recreation leadership training and education placed preferential emphasis on those skills and attitudes best suited to management of recreation services for the wealthy.

A prescription for balanced progress in the development of a balanced profession, sensitive to the recreation requirements of all, has been written by leaders of the profession and merits support by government and its instrumentalities. The Elora Prescription (see Veal, 1987) lists recommended directions for progress:

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Recommended directions for progress (The Elora Prescription)

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<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
Narrow definitions of leisure	Broad definitions of leisure, fitness and human potential
Recreation as discretionary time	Leisure in any/all spaces where chosen activity is possible
Emphasis on children and youth	Equal service provided at all life-cycle stages
Centralisation	Decentralisation
Attempts to <i>provide</i> leisure	Focus on <i>preconditions to leisure</i> (time, opportunity, real choice and the capacity to choose)
Service delivery	Community resourcefulness and animation

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### 4.3 Recreation, Leisure and Target Groups

Sometimes in the interests of equity or equality of opportunity, certain *groups have been targeted for special treatment* by those with public responsibility for fostering recreation and sport 'for all citizens'.

While the intent in such cases may have been commendable, recurring criticism of the resultant programmes and the rationale behind them has been expressed by the targeted groups themselves.

Representatives speaking and writing on behalf of *women* (Deem, 1986), and *youth* (Victoria Youth Policy Development Council, 1986) raise similar objections, many of which are pertinent to the three frameworks of analysis discussed earlier.

In essence, women and youth argue that their *right to leisure* is no less than that of any other group of citizens. They are attracted no less than others to leisure and its associated *benefits*: to the enjoyment, the freedom of choice, the independence, the relaxation and the excitement, the social interaction; and to activities that increase the sense of control over one's own life and one's own body and strength. But, particularly in the case of women, they do need *encouragement* to separate at least some of their time and energy for leisure and relaxation and to enter recreation spaces, in place and time, traditionally regarded as 'inappropriate' for them.

By most criteria, the constraints on leisure are severe for many women and young people but this does not mean that their 'problems' are simply solved by more efficient *social administration* of existing services delivering traditional 'goods'. The 'problem' of their low levels of participation in sport, for example, is better approached by examining the restrictions on their power to choose it and the limits on its power to attract, than by assuming that increased provision of 'more of the same' opportunities will eventually satisfy a 'normal' desire to take part.

Commonly, the target groups see the '*problem*' as lying not in them but *in the system* which renders and labels them disadvantaged. Their view of recreation is often that of the neo-Marxist: that all state-supported institutions reflect and reinforce the values, preferences and privileges of those who are dominant in the power structure.

If the right of all citizens to a fair distribution of leisure opportunities is to be respected, then the rationale for planning must include some political analysis (for example, of patriarchy, gender relations, youth relations, race). Leisure is, of course, not just a matter of facilities and institutions: it is an integral part of social relations 'informed by and contributing to the social order' (Deem, 1986).

For youth, women and other target groups, a short-term, 'trouble-shooting' strategy holds less promise than a developmental one aimed at *empowerment and the nurturing of self-determination*; that is, at the development of confident, competent and critical participants in the full life of the community.

The table below lays out some of the characteristics (on the left) of the therapeutic, remedial approach to target groups and (on the right) of the longer-term developmental approach.

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Characteristics of approaches to target groups

*From the Remedial*

*To the Developmental*

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Attempting to change the individual	Attempting to change social institutions
Problem and expert oriented	Community resource oriented
Social control	Social Change
Difference stigmatises	Difference creates potential
Alternatives introduced by experts from outside	Alternatives discovered by participation and choice
Single discipline approach for example, recreation programmes	Integrated approach for example, recreation AND housing, transport, health, education
View that leisure is a 'separable' component in people's lives	Recognition that leisure is integral (but vulnerable)

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**Source:** Victoria Youth Policy Development Council, 1986

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'Target groups' demonstrate the inadequacies of the notion of citizenship taken no further than expectations of equality and universality: even equality of opportunity does not guarantee *equality of outcome* and programmes based only on a principle of equality of provision fail to take account of the special circumstances of groups targeted because they have been labelled 'special'.

They may wish to *celebrate and highlight their distinct identity* (gender, race or sub-culture) through their leisure rather than have it obscured under a blanket of universal provision. In that case, *affirmative action* (positive, benign discrimination) is wanted, based on an understanding of differences in need. If the goals of the 'fair society' include acceptance of diverse identities and cultural pluralism, then they must be consciously built into the planning of services.

The search for social justice is no longer a matter of adjudicating between competing claims and interests of individuals sharing a clearly unified cultural identity; it is a search for principles capable of reconciling the diverse needs of its component groups. (Macintyre, 1985)

## 5. The Standards of the Fair Society

Earlier in this paper we made reference to recreation at three levels of experience -- *survival, growth and self-expression* -- which have sometimes been described as strata in a hierarchy of *human needs* and motivations (Maslow, 1968).

Claims that universal 'recreation needs' or '*leisure needs*' exist will always be vulnerable to the criticism that they do not belong in the same class as the fundamental biological needs and so should be called something else.

Even so, there is obviously motivation in human behaviour which cannot be accounted for purely by reference to instinct and physiological survival and some types of behaviour, consistent over history and across cultures, continue to be linked to the concept of '*higher human needs*'. The higher order motivations (drives or needs) are used to explain social and self-expressive behaviour as part of a human search for *personal and social identity and the attainment of individual potential*.

The Royal Commission's frame of reference requires it to consider 'the needs of New Zealanders' not only with regard to survival and subsistence deficit but also with regard to opportunities for the development of *human potential, social wellbeing, self-reliance and a sense of belonging to the community*.

Leisure research suggests that such concepts are central to the motivations and meaning that people associate with their leisure and recreation and why, therefore, the protection and expansion of opportunities for leisure and recreation is compatible with the apparent aims of the Commission.

The compatibility is endorsed by the prominence in the leisure literature of a number of themes which are touched on next.

## 5.1 The Benefits of Recreation and Leisure

The benefits which accrue as a result of recreational activity can be grouped as *personal, societal and economic*. The last group, which includes employment-generation, has already been mentioned. In the other two groups there is direct or strong inferential evidence that, among other benefits, those listed immediately below are often sought and found (Kelly, 1981).

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### *Personal benefits*

Physical and mental health  
Contexts for growth and learning  
Opportunities for activity between  
the extremes: boredom and anxiety  
Cultural enrichment  
Rest, recuperation, contrast  
Sense of identity and involvement

### *Societal benefits*

Family stability and coherence  
Strengthened community values  
Environmental and cultural concerns  
Development of value orientations  
(like co-operation) which are  
conducive to productivity  
Human potential development

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## 5.2 Recreation, Leisure and the Quality of Life

Recreation and leisure (times and places) are opportunities to be with others in significant ways that develop and express these relationships. Such opportunities are highly valued and centrally placed among factors affecting people's perceptions of the quality of their lives.

Similarly, while leisure opportunities tend to be regarded as less important than other dimensions of community life (economic and educational) in relation to community subsistence, satisfaction with leisure is a strong indicator of *overall satisfaction with life* in one's own community (Allen, 1987).

## 5.3 Leisure, Work and Unemployment

Few leisure researchers would argue that leisure will soon replace *work as the central interest in life* for the majority of the population or even for those not in paid employment.

Functionally and morally, 'one must *earn* a living' is still a powerful message even for those outside the work force and even allowing for the fact that the importance of work may often be superseded by concerns for kinship in the case of Maori and Pacific Island peoples. Attempts to compensate for non-employment with programmes of alternative 'meaningful activity', including recreation, have had mixed results.



Nevertheless, constructive lessons have been learned (Haworth, 1986):

- The satisfaction of *being productive* and creative is, for most people, more likely to be found away from the 'work-place' than at it.
- Recreation can offer a number of the conditions for satisfaction, denial of which can produce in the unemployed a sense of deprivation: *time structure, activity, social experience, collective purposes, status and identity*.
- Recreation and leisure can provide a number of the *categories of experience* that are sought through work but can also be found outside it:
 

finding employment	mixing socially
feeling needed	being committed
being creative	filling time purposefully
relaxing	getting out and away
keeping fit	learning, keeping alert.

#### 5.4 Recreation as Welfare

From time to time, schemes have been designed to use recreation instrumentally, to tackle *social (but non-recreational) problems* (like suburban isolation) and 'anti-social' behaviour (like urban violence).

When in tune with prevailing political strategies they have sometimes been accelerated by booster funding and have some-times succeeded in widening recreation choices for the disadvantaged, occasionally modifying the unwanted behaviour (Rigg, 1986).

Once again, the degree of success of such 'welfare' programmes has varied but some principles are persistent and note-worthy for recreation planners and makers of social policy.

- The *essential values of recreation and leisure are intrinsic*. When extrinsic goals are introduced they can obscure the primary values and produce confusion both for participants and 'providers'.
- Recreation is sustained and enjoyed most when it is part of the individual's *life-style* and has its roots in local *communities*, rather than when it is designed or force-fed from the outside. The *pastoral animateur*, sensitive to the community in general, is usually more effectual than the enthusiast who is evangelical about some activities (sport, art, outdoor pursuits) in particular.

- Continuity of effect depends on *continuity of support*. Many recreation programmes have foundered at the hands of personnel prepared in a hurry and engaged too briefly.
- Most people recognise the desirability of leisure and recreation but many are put off by the forms and environments in which they are presented.

## **6. Recreation Policy and Strategies for Action**

### **6.1 Policy Responsive to Social and Economic Change**

Recreation policy and strategies for action can only be effective if they are responsive to social and economic change: changes in population structure, patterns of employment, energy use, attitudes to equity and social rights, to community and local government and time allocation. The following section refers to some of these changes (including those discussed by Davey, 1987), which have implications for people's leisure and recreation and therefore for relevant policy decisions.

**CHANGING PATTERNS OF FAMILY STRUCTURE** As household and family structure change in size and composition, patterns of leisure behaviour become more diversified. There is extensive variation not only in recreation activities but in how recreation and leisure are defined across families. Recreation policies towards 'primary social units' will have to take such change and variation into account questioning the validity of traditional programmes and facilities oriented to the 'traditional' nuclear family, sometimes to the disadvantage of other groups and individuals.

**POPULATION GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION** A number of the predictions discussed by Davey (1987) are obviously important for recreation planners. The 'greying' of the population and retirement migration will, for example, have an impact on demand for recreation and leisure opportunities; especially in regions with favourable climates. So will the heavy spatial concentration of population within a two-hour drive of the main settlement areas. Especially in the North Island, the conflict of interests and demand among those responsible for different types of development (recreational, residential, industrial and commercial) is unlikely to diminish. Competition will focus on the same types of land and water (coastal and upland sites, rivers, lakes, forests and harbours) attractive to all the competing groups.

**AGE** Age has frequently been shown to have a significant influence on patterns of recreation participation and will have to be taken carefully into account in future recreation planning. Trends suggest, for example, that the recreation 'needs' preferences and tastes of the elderly will merit a higher priority.

**ETHNIC STRUCTURE** Ethnic diversity is expanding in New Zealand, and the cultural influence of the Maori and Pacific Island populations is strong. The socio-economic characteristics and concentration (especially in the North Island) of these two groups have important implications for leisure planning and policy in New Zealand, which must look beyond 'traditional' approaches and reflect a greater range of cultural values.

**INCOME AND LEISURE CONSUMPTION** Over the last two decades New Zealanders have tended to increase their spending on recreation, travel and holidays. In most recent years, however, the growth in energy-intensive pursuits like driving for pleasure and caravanning has slowed, presumably under the influence of inflation, declining disposable incomes and higher petrol prices. As a result, more recreation and leisure experiences will be sought at home or close to it, especially by the less affluent.

**HOUSING AND HOME OWNERSHIP** The level of home ownership in New Zealand is amongst the highest in the world and home-based activity is an extremely important feature of New Zealanders' leisure behaviour. Variety in family and household types and falling real incomes are changing the demand and capacity for home ownership; and recreation policy designed with the nuclear family and the 'family home' in mind will require revision and modification.

**TECHNOLOGY** The impact of technological change on recreation and leisure has been profound and too complex for adequate analysis here. The range of effects is clearly very wide. Most positively it has provided new bases for play, games, entertainment, and communication. Less positively, it has led to some 'de-skilling', redundancy and alienation through unemployment for which, in part, leisure is sometimes offered as compensation.

## 6.2 Strategies and Principles for Action

The following principles for action stem from observations of recreation policy in the context of social and economic change.

- Ensuring that a *widening range of choice* in recreational opportunities and leisure is made available to all New Zealanders: physical and non-physical; active and passive; indoor and outdoor; home-based and facility-based; publicly provided and privately initiated.
- Affirming that recreation and leisure are *valuable social opportunities* and services which all citizens in a fair society have the right to expect of their 'just institutions'.
- Clarifying *guidelines on equity and access*, to identify and assist groups most likely to be neglected, unfairly constrained or handicapped in their recreation and leisure choices by lack of information and knowledge, lack of motivation, false

perceptions and negative attitudes, lack of skill, lack of time and money, lack of transport, lack of confidence and lack of satisfaction.

- Recognizing that recreation and leisure do not exist in a *cultural, social or economic vacuum*; asking what socio-economic research can offer to leisure studies and what recreation can contribute to integrated approaches to social amelioration.
- Encouraging *decision-making and participation at the local level*, to facilitate self-help so that individuals, groups and communities may determine and organise the activities and experiences that come closest to satisfying their needs and interests. Agencies should attempt to communicate their recreation policies in local terms, to designate real resources to approved projects and to create opportunities for open and visible participation in priority-setting.
- *Reducing fragmentation* and exclusive specialisation; a cohesive and co-ordinated recreation policy must include reference to housing, education, health, employment, welfare, transport and the environment; recreation, in its turn has a place in the formulation of overall policies for the *management of natural resources and for the provision of social services*

## 7. Recommendations

Against the background of a review of social policy and observations from leisure studies discussed in this paper, it remains to recommend a number of directions for governmental action, principally at the central level.

**POLICY** That Government define and develop a recreation policy, state it explicitly, implement it consistently and reassess it regularly.

**EQUITY** That Government defend the principle of fair distributive justice in its support for recreation as one of the social services which addresses 'the needs of all New Zealanders'; and affects the standard and quality of life among disadvantaged groups: that is, those less able than other citizens to pursue their leisure interests in the free market or by voluntary effort.

**UNIVERSALITY** That Government provide adequate human, financial and material resources for recreation, to support its policy objectives and ensure an equitable distribution of these resources across the country and across communities of varying size, location, composition and wealth.

**DIVERSITY** That Government promote all spheres of recreation, including physical activity and sport, the arts, outdoor recreation, tourism and travel, social and community activities, continuing and non-formal education, giving dominant preference to no single sphere but seeking rather to identify the human needs which recreation can satisfy no matter how diverse the interests pursued.

**CONSERVATION** That Government protect and conserve finite resources with high recreation value (including land, the cultural and historical heritage, artistic talent, broadcasting wavelengths, etc) against commercial exploitation.

**CO-ORDINATION** That Government, without resort to unilateral or authoritarian measures, encourage rational co-ordination of recreational policy and action in all sectors (public, voluntary, private and commercial) to foster optimal use of community, regional and national resources.

**PROMOTION** That Government promote certain philosophies and programmes which are identified as being in the public interest but unlikely to be promoted by other provision sectors:

- to raise standards of fitness and health,
- to stimulate genuine social exchange,
- to develop creative endeavour and,
- to make natural areas and public and commercial facilities more accessible.

Where appropriate, projects and experiments should be initiated which:

- (a) are likely to contribute to the improvement of the physical and mental health of the population;
- (b) help New Zealanders appreciate the potential of recreation and leisure to bring increased pleasure, satisfaction and better quality into their lives;
- (c) encourage a progression from passive consumption to active participation;
- (d) support social and cultural activities (community celebrations, popular culture and festivals) centred on individual and group expression and creativity;
- (e) stimulate New Zealanders to discover and explore their rich natural heritage in the outdoors;
- (f) facilitate wider participation by all, and especially by those physically, economically and socially disadvantaged;

- (g) provide support for home-based recreation, as well as for more formally organised activity;
- (h) encourage groups and individuals to develop new forms of recreation activities;
- (i) encourage developmental rather than 'trouble-shooting' approaches to target groups identified as having special needs; and
- (j) monitor the development of recreation education and training to ensure the availability of the leadership and professional skills required both in the corporatist enterprises of physical resource management, and in the animation of diverse communities with pluralistic interest and enthusiasms.

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