

*Applications in*

# RECREATION & LEISURE

*For Today and the Future*

4<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

KATHLEEN A. CORDES



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*This book is dedicated to my former colleague  
and very dear friend,  
Hilmi Ibrahim, in remembrance*

*And to his lovely wife and my kind friend,  
Cynthia Ibrahim*



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# PREFACE

Leisure pursuits and recreational activities play a major role in the lifestyles of most individuals in most societies. Their phenomenal growth has attracted the attention of scholars from all walks of life who have devoted many hours to understanding the factors underlying such growth. These scholars agree that at the core of these desirable human experiences is play. Although the simplest of play forms may appear to be undifferentiated from one society to another, social, economic, and geographic factors have resulted in differences along the evolutionary scale.

## The Approach

The approach used in this book is universal for today's culturally diverse audience. After all, leisure pursuits are no longer the sole domain of the wealthy or the developed nations. Moreover, leisure careers are not limited to the public sector or to specific national boundaries.

The fourth edition of *Applications in Recreation & Leisure* provides a contemporary examination of leisure issues from philosophical, psychological, and sociological perspectives. The text views the history of leisure, leisure throughout the life course, leisure issues pertaining to aging and to the physically and developmentally disabled, multicultural and international issues, planning and management issues, and career opportunities. It looks at the past while pointing to the future. In examining leisure and recreation as human rights for all individuals, this text serves as a catalyst for critical thinking by students while providing a broad understanding of the different philosophies of the various providers of leisure services.

With its attractive two-color format, the fourth edition of *Applications in Recreation & Leisure* provides a very practical look at recreation and leisure with numerous pedagogical elements to help reinforce learning.

## Audience

This introductory text is written with the student in mind, a student who has chosen to study leisure and recreation as part of his or her college education. The student will gain a meaningful understanding of these activities and how they impact many lives, including his or her own. The student will come to appreciate (a) the important roles that leisure and recreation play in different parts of the world and (b) the complex organization needed to provide leisure services at all levels.

A second audience comprises students who are exploring leisure and recreation for a possible career. Understanding individual tendencies affected by age, gender, or educational background is important for a well-designed recreation program. The planning, organizing, and administering of leisure pursuits and recreational activities help facilitate the services provided for large numbers of people at all levels, whether local, regional, state, or national. *Applications in Recreation & Leisure* looks to the future while considering changes that have taken place and are still taking place in the field.

## Features

- ◆ A comprehensive and practical look at recreation and leisure from philosophical, psychological, and sociological perspectives is presented. This multidisciplinary approach provides a unifying perspective. It examines current issues and challenges affected by demographic trends, education, finances, public sentiment, laws, and legislation.
- ◆ Leisure and recreation are presented before play to strengthen the theoretical explanation of these important foundational concepts. Scholarly interpretations of the meaning of leisure,

recreation, and play are examined. Additional theories, such as Nash's paradigm of free time, have been included.

- ◆ Cultural diversity is examined, such as the evolution of ritual and tradition in enhancing leisure experiences today. A global approach is used to study a variety of leisure and recreation activities, such as the popularity of Oktoberfest in Germany, bullfighting and soccer in Mexico, and the development of yoga in India.
- ◆ Violence in adolescence is explored, including the value of well-structured recreation programs, such as outreach programs in urban environments and the Outward Bound program, in modifying inappropriate behavior among "youth at risk."
- ◆ Leisure issues pertaining to the elderly and the physically and developmentally disabled are addressed. With appropriately structured leisure and recreational programs and pursuits, the elderly can be helped to focus on exercise; the physically challenged can improve their motor skills and coordination; and the mentally challenged can improve their skills and self-confidence.
- ◆ Leisure throughout the life course, from childhood through adolescence and adulthood, is examined. Play at these different stages is explored, as are the physical, mental, psychological, and social benefits of leisure.
- ◆ Career opportunities are discussed in the areas of leadership, management, and ethics.
- ◆ Trends and values are highlighted. Examples include the restructuring of job responsibilities; the need for leisure education, leisure counselors, and collaboration; the benefits of technological and medical advancements; increased environmental concerns; improved services and accommodations for the elderly and the disabled; caregiving; more single parents and working mothers; more single adults; community outreach programs to assist the homeless; and counseling programs.

## **New or Expanded Topics**

### **Chapter 1: The Nature of Leisure, Recreation, and Play**

- ◆ Leisure as a state of mind
- ◆ Recent theories of play

### **Chapter 2: The Evolution of Leisure, Recreation, and Play**

- ◆ Early societies
- ◆ Historical events and the development of leisure and recreation
- ◆ Use of time in the United States

### **Chapter 3: Leisure, Recreation, and the Individual**

- ◆ Physical fitness update
- ◆ Link between leisure pursuits and life satisfaction with current statistics

### **Chapter 4: Play, Recreation, and the Life Course: Children**

- ◆ Updated population statistics
- ◆ Childhood obesity as a serious health with current statistics
- ◆ Children's sports with current trends

### **Chapter 5: Recreation, Leisure, and the Life Course: Adolescents**

- ◆ Inside the teenage brain
- ◆ Updates on teen suicide statistics
- ◆ Role of the leisure provider in influencing identity formation
- ◆ Eating disorders

### **Chapter 6: Recreation, Leisure, and the Life Course: Adults and Seniors**

- ◆ Life expectancy figures updated to 2020
- ◆ Population expectations updated to 2025
- ◆ Trends and statistics for young middle and older adults

### **Chapter 7: Recreation, Leisure, and Society**

- ◆ Updated expenditures on leisure
- ◆ Trends in media and leisure
- ◆ Technology and leisure updated

### **Chapter 8: The International Scene**

- ◆ Status of leisure and recreation in selected countries
- ◆ Developing nations and leisure updated
- ◆ Comparative data on holidays and vacation time with various countries



## Chapter 9: Diversity and Inclusiveness

- ◆ Family life and time together
- ◆ Updates on equality and statistics on disability
- ◆ Natural resources near cities
- ◆ Sport/recreation participation for men, women, boys, and girls updated

## Chapter 10: Providers and Resources

- ◆ Public providers with new statistics and trends.
- ◆ National Trails and Scenic Byways updates
- ◆ Travel and tourism with new statistics
- ◆ Military recreation and camps

## Chapter 11: The Profession

- ◆ Role of ethics for the leisure professional
- ◆ Professional recreation and leisure associations in Canada, other countries, and the world
- ◆ Therapeutic recreation and other careers
- ◆ Career growth statistics in recreation and leisure

## Chapter 12: Planning and Management in Recreation and Leisure

- ◆ National, regional, and local approaches to planning and management
- ◆ Recreational spending and financial aspects of recreation management
- ◆ Importance of evaluation

## Chapter 13: Issues and Challenges in Recreation and Leisure

- ◆ High-risk recreation, sedentary lifestyles
- ◆ Updates on substance abuse and other questionable activities during free time
- ◆ Crowding, carrying capacity, and possible options

## Chapter 14: Adding More Value

- ◆ Adding value environmentally and through collaboration
- ◆ Helping the homeless and proving correctional recreation
- ◆ Single adults as a recognized trend

## Pedagogy

- ◆ Chapter opening quotes: Related quotes begin each chapter to further enhance student interest in the chapter topic.
- ◆ Chapter at a Glance: Each chapter begins with a brief overview that sets the theme for the chapter.
- ◆ Chapter Objectives: The chapters open with identification of concepts to be mastered in each chapter.
- ◆ A World of Difference: Case studies in every chapter provide practical applications of the content. These correspond with Your Turn questions at the end of the chapter and allow students to determine solutions for each case discussed.
- ◆ Action Guide: These self-evaluations enable students to apply chapter content to themselves.
- ◆ Concept Checks: These questions are integrated within the text to provide immediate review of chapter content to reinforce learning.
- ◆ A Closer Look: These boxes provide additional coverage of related topics to complement each chapter's content.
- ◆ Glossary: New terms that the student will learn in each chapter are identified here.
- ◆ Summaries: The main concepts of the chapter are summarized for a quick review of chapter content and to help in test preparation.
- ◆ Using What You've Learned: These activities at the conclusion of each chapter provide related activities for student completion.
- ◆ Your Turn: Located at the end of each chapter, these questions correspond with
- ◆ References: Concluding each chapter, the references provide thorough documentation of material and are a resource for students to obtain additional information.



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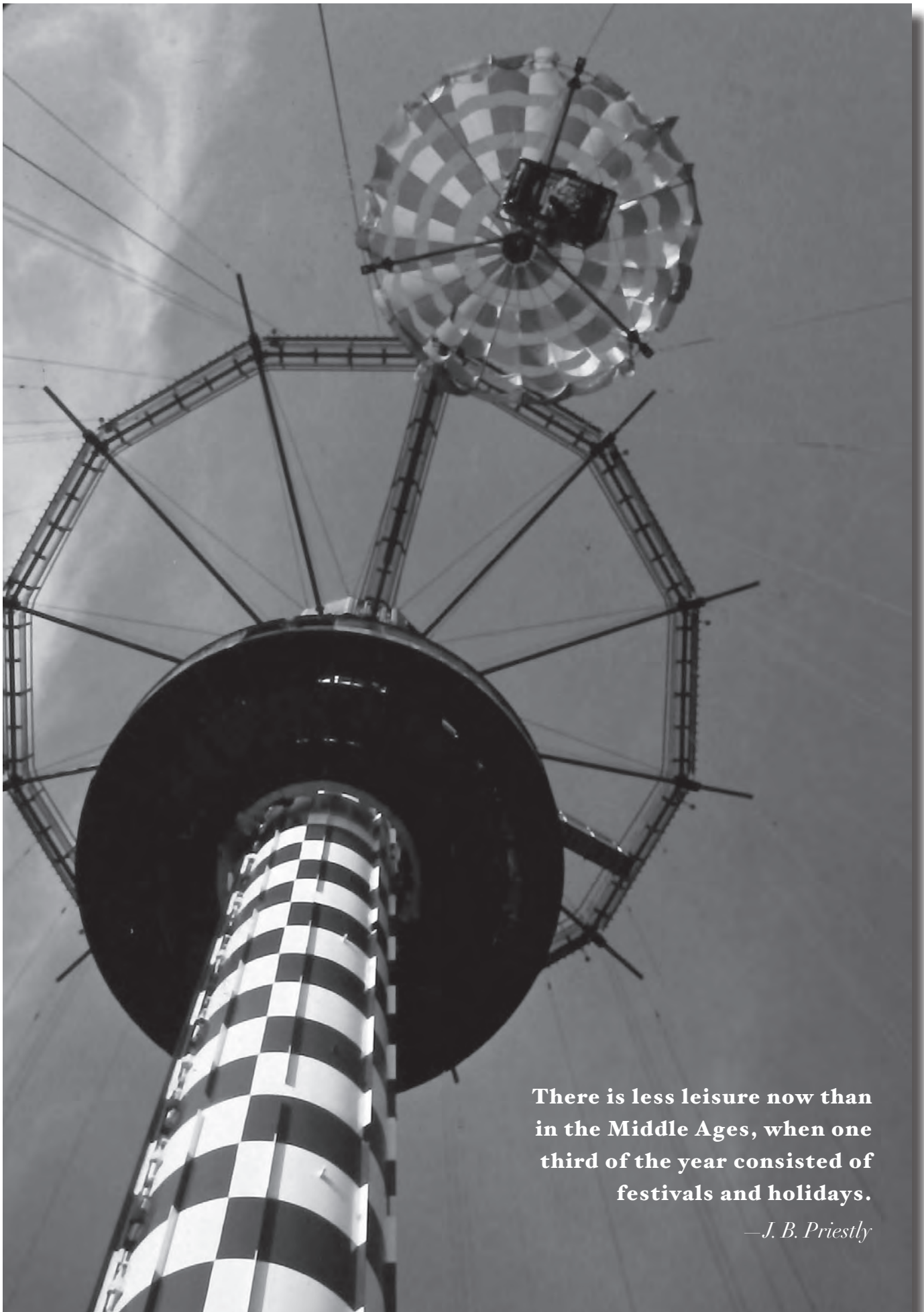
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**There is less leisure now than  
in the Middle Ages, when one  
third of the year consisted of  
festivals and holidays.**

*—J. B. Priestly*

# 1 The Nature of Leisure, Recreation, and Play

## *Chapter at a Glance*

*In this chapter, three terms are defined that will be used throughout the text: leisure, recreation, and play. Various theories of why people play are presented, and comments are offered on each. Finally, ideas are presented on the motivation for and benefits from engaging in leisure, recreation, and play.*

## **CHAPTER OBJECTIVES**

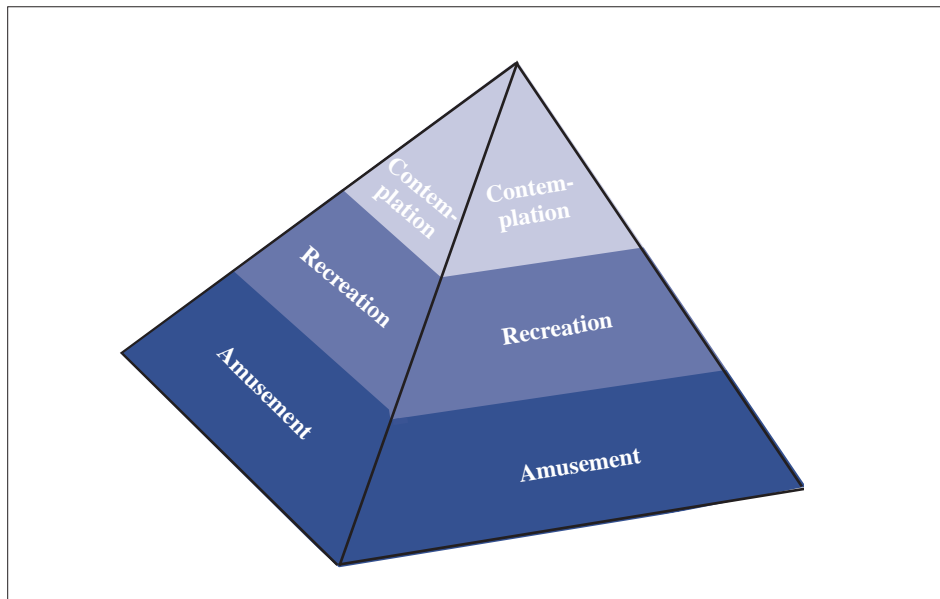
After completing this chapter, you should be able to

- ◆ define leisure, recreation, and play;
- ◆ explain the three essential elements of a leisure experience;
- ◆ discuss leisure in terms of (a) free or residual time, (b) activities, and (c) a state of mind;
- ◆ explain the difference between leisure and recreation;
- ◆ briefly explain the different interpretations of play; and
- ◆ describe factors that may motivate individuals to engage in leisure, recreation, and play.

### **The Nature of Leisure**

Leisure is difficult to define because it means something different to each person, yet scholars have always been interested in the study of leisure. The first attempt to understand leisure probably took place about 300 B.C. The ancient Greeks were intrigued by leisure, and the philosopher Aristotle suggested a paradigm, or model, by which leisure could be categorized. In this paradigm, depicted in Figure 1.1, Aristotle proposed that leisure occurs at three levels: amusement, recreation, and contemplation (more on that later).

Almost 600 years ago, a scholar in another part of the world suggested that the desire for leisure is one of five basic human desires. This scholar, Khaldun, was a historian who is also considered to be the father of sociology. Khaldun ranked these five desires in ascending order, with leisure at the pinnacle of the pyramid.<sup>1</sup> More recently, American psychologist Maslow emphasized the importance of certain activities in human life. Figure 1.2 shows his paradigm, which is similar to Khaldun's. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs begins with basic physiological needs, which appear at the bottom of the figure, and culminates with self-actualization,



**Figure 1.1. Aristotle's Three Levels of Leisure**

which makes up its highest level. In his early work, Maslow suggested that the human need for aesthetics (appreciation of beauty and order) and cognition (knowledge and understanding) precedes the need for self-actualization.<sup>2</sup>

### Defining Leisure

The term *leisure* came into use only recently in the United States. In contrast, the term *recreation* has been used by professionals since the early 20th century. For example, in Butler's pioneering book on recreation in America, the term leisure appeared only five times.<sup>3</sup> Butler suggested that recreation is a leisure-time activity and that, for most people, recreational opportunities are largely confined to their leisure hours. He noted that an increase in leisure took place in the early 1900s, when working hours became shorter. When people worked 12 to 14 hours a day, 6 days a week, he pointed out, the problem of recreational use of leisure was nonexistent. In a sense, the author equated leisure with free time. However, having free time does not necessarily mean that one is at leisure. For example, a prisoner or a sick person who is confined to bed has plenty of free time but is not at leisure.

Nevertheless, scholars continued to define *leisure* as free time. In the late 1940s and in the 1950s, several books about leisure were published.<sup>4,5,6,7</sup> Then, in 1960, Charles Brightbill, a scholar of recreation, asked the question "What is leisure?" He

concluded that the meaning of leisure varies among cultures and that there is little agreement about its meaning and implications. For example, some see leisure as freedom from work, while others view it as an important tool of social control or a symbol of one's status. Still others believe that leisure is simply a state of calm and a form of contemplative dignity.<sup>8</sup>

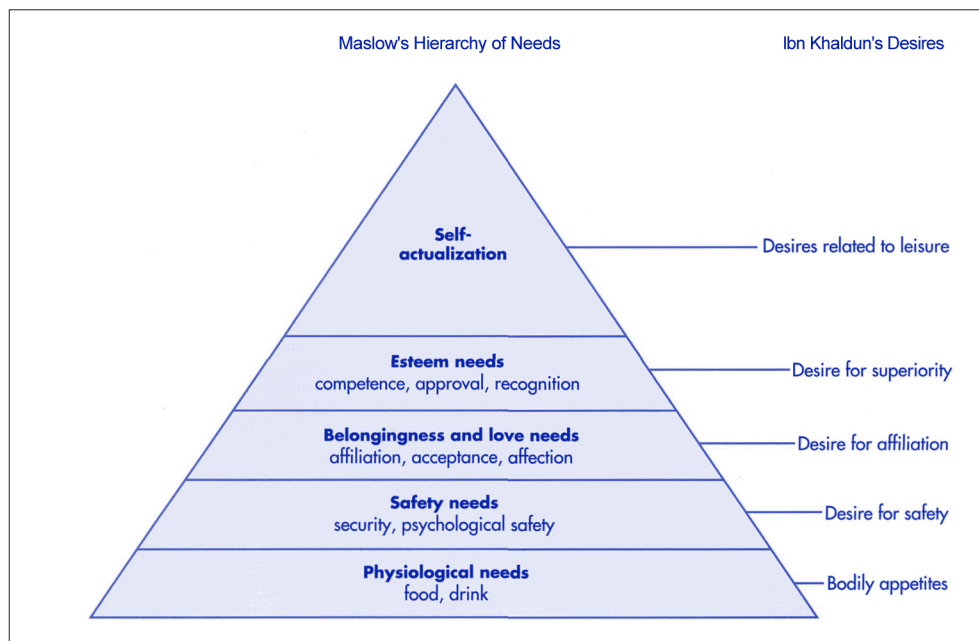
The debate about the meaning of leisure continues. Some contend that leisure denotes a desirable state rather than pleasurable experiences, even though both of these views center on the use of free time.<sup>9</sup>

Developments in Europe and other parts of the world have also highlighted the universality and importance of leisure, recreation, and play in people's lives. For example, Huizinga's book, *Homo Ludens: A Study of Play Elements in Culture*, showed the role of leisure activities in different cultures.<sup>10</sup> In the book *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, Pieper asserts, "Culture depends for its very existence on leisure, and, in its turn, is not possible unless it has a durable and consequently living link with the culture, with divine worship."<sup>11</sup>

The following decade, Kaplan contended that America had entered an age of leisure:<sup>12</sup>

Every facet of American life is included in the phrase that we are in an age of leisure. Our week is shorter. Our family life has changed its character. Our familiar sources of control, such as church or elders of the community, are no longer in dominance.





**Figure 1.2. A Comparison of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs with Khaldun's Hierarchy of Desires**

Freedom from work and obligation became the definition of leisure. According to this view, leisure occurs when people are most free to be themselves. Kaplan suggested that culture can be understood through leisure.

Other clues also indicated that leisure is an element of culture. The evidence came not only from industrial societies but also from developing ones, and scholars from many countries were becoming interested in the phenomenon of leisure. Dumazedier, for example, believed that people engage in leisure by free will. The purpose of leisure, he maintained, is to rest, to amuse oneself, to learn, or to improve personal skills.<sup>13</sup> Nakhoodu said that the unoccupied space that makes a room habitable is like leisure, which makes life endurable.<sup>14</sup> In the Arab world, Hafez claimed that free time had increased so much among Egyptian youth that recreational activities should be provided.<sup>15</sup> In Great Britain, books appeared in which the impact of leisure on British society was debated.<sup>16,17,18</sup>

In the United States, Brightbill suggested that the term *leisure* is so abstract that it cannot be given a workable definition. MacLean, Peterson, and Martin thought that the abstract nature of the term made it nearly impossible for the average person to grasp its meaning.<sup>19</sup>

Despite these difficulties, scholars continue to try to define leisure. These attempts have taken three

general forms. The first is to study the origin of the word as a way of revealing its underlying meaning. The second is to examine the experiences a person has when he or she engages in activities described as leisure. The third approach is to evaluate the motives people have for engaging in such experiences.

The word *leisure* is derived from the Latin word *licer*, which means "to permit or allow." *Licer* is also the Latin root of the word *permission*. This is an important clue, and in this text leisure is defined as permission to do as one pleases at one's own pace, to participate in an activity of one's choice, and to abandon the activity at will. The leisure experience has three essential elements:

- **Perceived freedom.** One embarks on the experience at will and is also able to leave it at will. For example, you have the freedom to drive to the beach on a Sunday, stay as long as you like, and leave when you're tired. If you're employed, realistically you don't have the freedom to make these choices during the workweek.
- **Autotelic activity.** Autotelic means having a purpose in and not apart from itself. An autotelic activity, therefore, is one that is done through self-motivation and not because of some external factor. For example, a dedicated amateur plays soccer out of love of the game, not for monetary gain.

- **Beneficial outcome.** One undertakes the activity on the assumption that doing so will yield some benefit. For example, you may work out at the gym to lose weight, increase strength, or improve endurance.

Three distinct approaches to defining the leisure experience are outlined in the next sections.

### Leisure as Residual Time

British sociologist Parker defined *leisure* as residual time, to be calculated in the following way. Beginning with a 24-hour day, subtract the hours that are not devoted to leisure: working, sleeping, eating, attending to physical needs, and so forth.<sup>20</sup> Residual time means, quite simply, time left over—in the case of leisure, time left over after one has performed the tasks necessary to exist (continue to be) and to subsist (have or acquire the necessities of life, such as food and clothing). Figure 1.3 shows the overlapping relationship among these times. Time is easily understood in terms of hours, days, and weeks. For this reason, leisure is usually defined in terms of these elements.

Yet an overlap among these three sets exists because it is rather hard to separate them. For instance, is a leisurely meal a form of free time activity, or is it an activity for existence?

In 1953, Nash, one of the pioneers of recreation and leisure studies in America, supplied a paradigm explaining the levels of participation in experiences in which one takes part during free time.<sup>21</sup> In his paradigm (Figure 1.4), Nash indicated that the abuse of free time is possible. Free time should be differentiated from existence time—the time to fulfill one's physical and psychological needs—and from subsistence time—the time to do work and conduct work-related activities (Figure 1.3).

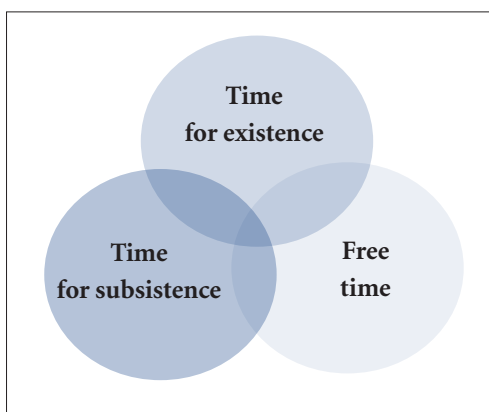


Figure 1.3. Three Sets of Time

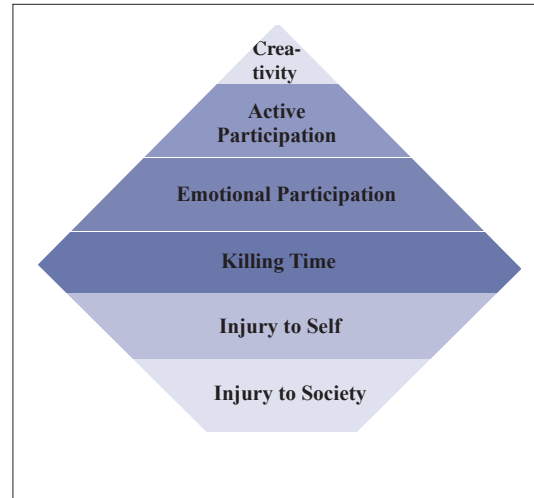


Figure 1.4. Nash's Paradigm of Free Time

### Leisure as Activities

*Activity* is commonly defined as the performance of a specific deed or act. Although there is an almost endless variety of human acts, they all have certain characteristics in common. For example, many human acts begin with a condition of disequilibrium. Shibutani, a Japanese American social psychologist in the 1960s, suggested that one can analyze a human act by breaking it down into functional units, or phases, as outlined below.<sup>22</sup>

**The impulsive phase.** In this phase, the condition of disequilibrium sets an organism into motion. The act normally continues until equilibrium is restored. The simplest impulses are physiological: hunger, fatigue, adverse environmental conditions, and assault by a predator or an enemy. Disequilibrium also can be of a social or psychological nature, such as the feeling that you are not dressed appropriately. Boredom may also ignite a feeling of disequilibrium.

**The perception phase.** Once set in motion by a condition of disequilibrium, the organism seeks to perceive in its environment some means of achieving equilibrium. In the case of boredom, you may perceive reaching equilibrium by engaging in drawing.

**The manipulation phase.** After perceiving a means of achieving equilibrium, you next must manipulate yourself, others, or objects in the environment. For example, in the case of boredom, you think of what, where, and when to draw.





Participants at Red Mountain Spa in Utah take a leisurely break from the fitness program at the rock labyrinth.

**The consummation phase.** In this final stage of the act, equilibrium is restored—in the case of hunger, by eating. Except in cases of physiological disequilibrium (hunger, fatigue, adverse environmental conditions, assault), it is not always easy to determine when consummation of an act has occurred. The key is that striving has ceased and that the organism is once more in balance.

**Expressive and instrumental acts.** For purposes of this discussion, two types of acts are identified: expressive and instrumental. An expressive act begins with an impulsive phase and emphasizes the processes of perception and manipulation rather than consummation. An instrumental act also begins with an impulsive phase but focuses on consummation rather than perception and manipulation. In the drawing example, is the emphasis on drawing itself (expressive act) or on producing a portrait to be sold (instrumental act)?

Although there clearly is some overlap between these two types of acts, the tendency is to associate instrumental acts with tasks that should or must be completed, such as attending class, working, or doing chores, and to associate expressive acts with more enjoyable pursuits such as hobbies, sports, and travel. In this context, leisure activities clearly are more likely to be expressive acts rather than instrumental acts.

### Leisure as a State of Mind

Many scholars have speculated about the importance of one's state of mind in a given leisure ex-

perience. Kraus maintained the importance of one's perception of freedom in the motivations for, the conditions of, and the attitudes about leisure.<sup>23</sup>

Perceived freedom, mentioned above, is one of four criteria that have been identified by social psychologists studying the state of mind or that which one experiences. These criteria generally serve as a means to measure or define it. *Perceived motion* references the individual's concept of independence during participation. When the participant feels neither inhibited nor constrained, there is a higher degree of perceived freedom. The other three criteria, intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and positive affect, are described below.<sup>24</sup>

*Intrinsic motivation* comes from within the individual rather than from without. When not dependent upon external reward, the participant's sense of perceived freedom is raised as well as his or her feeling of greater satisfaction, enjoyment, and gratification. Likewise, when the participant believes he or she has the necessary qualifications, or *perceived competence*, the feeling of satisfaction, enjoyment, and gratification rises. *Positive affect* occurs when the leisure experience is personalized or when it is possible for the participant to influence the way in which the leisure experience develops and relates to his or her personal needs.

Psychologist Neulinger, author of the book *The Psychology of Leisure*, distinguished leisure from nonleisure based on one's *perceived freedom* (leisure) versus *perceived constraint* (nonleisure). These two categories can each be broken down into three types: those motivated by intrinsic reward, those

motivated by extrinsic rewards (such as prizes), and those motivated by a mixture of internal and external rewards. Thus, according to Neulinger's paradigm, activities can be divided into a total of six activity categories. Some activities are motivated by purely one or the other type of reward, but the majority were motivated by a combination of the two.<sup>25</sup>

It is important to note that the opposite of leisure is not work, it is obligation.<sup>26</sup> Many experiences that are not work or related to work, and which may be thought of as leisurely, are not true leisure experiences. A professional ballplayer is not at leisure when obligated to participate in the sport at a certain time for monetary reward. A person who is obligated to mow his or her own lawn is not working for money but is certainly not at leisure. The term *leisure* is not applicable in either of these two cases

because leisure is not merely an activity engaged in during free time but rather a way of being, a philosophy about living, and above all a particular state of mind. Without freedom of choice, there is no leisure.<sup>27</sup>



- *What are three approaches to defining leisure?*
- *What is the difference between an expressive act and an instrumental act?*

## Action Guide

**TIME OUT!** Whatever your age, sex, or background, as a college student, you definitely have a full plate. You're trying to balance study, work, family, social life, sports, and hobbies and still squeeze in time for meals and sleep. Whether you plan to major in recreation or just check out the field in this one course, you can do yourself a favor by taking time out to conduct your own personal "leisure profile." Just take this quick quiz, and you'll gain some insight into your "leisure personality."

- In order of preference, rank your five favorite leisure activities. In the spaces that follow, write down first the amount of time you would like to devote to each activity and then the time you actually devote to each.
  - \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_
- How closely does your real-life leisure activity pattern follow your list of favorites?
- If there's a significant disparity, how might you rearrange your schedule to make your leisure time more rewarding?



Kayaking is a popular recreational activity.

## Recreation

As with leisure, *recreation* is a term for which there is no universally agreed-on definition. For purposes of this text, *recreation* is defined as voluntary participation in leisure activities that are meaningful and enjoyable to the person involved. The term embraces both indoor and outdoor activities and refers to sports and exercise as well as to less physically active pursuits. As this definition makes clear, recreation is one aspect of the broader term *leisure*, which encompasses not only vigorous activities such as softball and hiking but also sedentary hobbies such as coin and stamp collecting as well as more passive pastimes such as dozing in a hammock or getting a relaxing facial. The link between leisure and recreation was probed by Aristotle. He suggested that leisure can be classified into three overlapping categories: contemplation, recreation, and amusement (Figure 1.1). Contemplation is the act of considering something with attention. Recreation is the active, participatory aspect of leisure. Amusement is passive reception on the part of an audience or spectators.



### *A World of Difference . . .*

#### **One Boy's Work is Another Boy's Play**

*Strong, healthy, intelligent, successful*—those are all words used by friends and family to describe Chris Makos and John Shu. Best friends since grade school, they're now 17, classmates in their high school's honors program and participants in a wide variety of school activities. They study together, attend the same parties, and travel everywhere in Chris's beat-up VW Rabbit. They love Cajun music, hate anchovies on pizza, and think America needs a third political party.

As close as Chris and John are in countless ways, when it comes to play they're worlds apart. Stocky, aggressive Chris, the youngest of six sons in a vigorous Greek American family, has been on a soccer field since he was a toddler. Now captain of the high school team, he's a feisty forward who's spearheaded three undefeated seasons and two state titles. Like his father, uncles, cousins, and five older brothers, Chris thrives on the dirt, sweat, and glory of his rough-and-tumble game. Although he plans to pursue a doctorate in nuclear physics, he's also determined to play college soccer and is looking at scholarship offers from several top schools.

Where is John while Chris is embroiled in the grit and grind of top-gun soccer? Either huddled intently over a chessboard—often at a regional or state competition—or at the indoor tennis courts, usually before dawn, perfecting an already deadly game of astonishing technical expertise. For both John and his two younger sisters, play and leisure mean taking every opportunity to hone their intellectual skills by mastering the intricacies of chess and the complex strategies of high-intensity tennis. It wouldn't even occur to the Shu kids to engage in the down and dirty of soccer, lacrosse, or other physical-contact sports. Like their parents and members of their extended family, they're happiest and most fulfilled when they're tackling strategic, not physical, challenges.

As you study this chapter, think about Chris's and John's extremely different uses of play and leisure time and prepare to answer the questions in Your Turn at the end of the chapter.



Contemplation is the core of philosophical thinking, so Aristotle, as a philosopher, understandably viewed contemplation as the highest form of leisure and encouraged its practice. He accepted the recreational use of leisure time but derided amusement.

Today the term *recreation* is used to describe activities in a variety of structured settings.

### Public Recreation

*Public recreation* consists of programs offered by nonprofit public agencies that are designed to meet the needs of people of varied ages, backgrounds, and interests. Programs may be conducted indoors or outdoors and may involve sports and fitness activities as well as nature study and crafts. Some activities are free; others are available at a modest cost.

### Commercial Recreation

*Commercial recreation* describes programs and activities that are offered for profit on a fee basis. Examples are fitness centers, health clubs, indoor tennis and racquetball facilities, yoga and aerobics studios, and driving ranges for golfers.

### Corporate Recreation

*Corporate recreation* refers to activities sponsored by companies and organizations for the benefit of their employees. Examples are company softball and bowling teams and fitness centers.

### Therapeutic Recreation

Therapeutic recreation consists of programs offered by both public and private agencies for the benefit of specific populations. Examples are exercise, sports, and craft programs for people with disabilities.

### Other Recreational Settings

Other recreational settings are provided on an individual basis, as in playing golf at a private club or participating in military recreation.

## Concept Check

- Briefly explain the relationship between leisure and recreation.
- Identify the key difference between public and commercial recreation programs.

## Play: The Nucleus of Leisure and Recreation

When Thomas Edison was asked how many hours a day he worked, he replied, “I play sixteen hours a day.” For Edison, with his curiosity, imagination, energy, and ingenuity, what looked to others like tedious work was actually stimulating and enjoyable—qualities that tend to be associated with play rather than with work.

Let’s look at other assumptions about the nature of play. Have you ever wished you could be a professional athlete, a rock star, or a Hollywood producer? On the surface, their lives look glamorous, luxurious, and carefree—perfect examples of “no work and all play.” If you take a closer look at how these celebrities live, however, you’ll find they pay a big price for their wealth and fame: the long hours of practice and rehearsal; the instability and inconvenience of life on the road; and the seemingly endless obligations to fans, investors, and sponsors.

As you can see from these examples, definitions of *play* tend to be subjective, and they are often based on superficial impressions. For the purposes of this text, you need a collective understanding about the basic elements and characteristics of play; that is, you need an *operational*, or working, definition of play.

Play is defined because it is at the core of the two concepts that have already been introduced: leisure and recreation. Play can be defined as activities in which individuals engage freely and from which they derive personal satisfaction.

At this point, there are three general observations that can be made about play:

- Play is witnessed among the young of most higher animals, particularly primates. Young chimpanzees, for example, spend most of their time playing.<sup>28</sup>
- Play seems to be a universal activity among the young of humankind, regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture. The sequence of children’s play forms is remarkably stable across populations. Children first learn to manipulate their bodies, then to manipulate objects outside themselves. Their play subsequently becomes repetitive, then expands to include others, and finally becomes rule governed.<sup>29</sup>
- Research indicates there is some biological basis for play. Some scientists believe that the urge to play may be a by-product of some chemical process, that a hormonal code or genetic programming may initiate and propel play.<sup>30</sup> When certain parts of the brains of small animals are

destroyed, the animals revert to behaviors that are devoid of play.<sup>31</sup>

## Interpretations of Play

Play is a phenomenon that has intrigued scholars for centuries. Specialists in a variety of disciplines have studied play intensively, seeking to interpret it in terms of their particular scientific orientation. In this section, five interpretations of play are introduced: biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, and recent ones.

### Biological Interpretations

In the 18th and 19th centuries, several scholars formulated theories based on the idea that humans and higher animal species, particularly the young, are impelled to play by certain unchangeable biological traits. In essence these theorists believed it is impossible to modify this inborn impulse to play. Although many contemporary scholars believe the tendency to play may have some biological basis, they also recognize other factors that motivate play. Some of those factors will be examined in later sections.

Von Schiller, an 18th-century German poet and philosopher, offered what is considered a classic definition when he described play as “an aimless expenditure of exuberant energy.”<sup>32</sup> Spencer, a 19th-century English philosopher, suggested that lower forms of animals expend all their energies in maintaining life: searching for food, caring for their young, avoiding predators, and seeking shelter. Higher animals, on the other hand, are left with some organs and muscles in a dormant stage. It is this unexpended, dormant, and excess energy, Spencer postulated, that motivates higher animals to engage in play. Rats gnaw at anything, cats fight dogs, dogs chase cats, and human beings “blow off steam” in play.<sup>33</sup>

Groos, a Swiss philosopher of the early 20th century, emphasized the teleological, or purposeful, significance of play. He based his theory on the observation that lower animals are endowed with instincts that appear to be fully developed and ready for use. (An *instinct* is the largely inherited and unalterable tendency of an organism to respond to environmental stimuli without the use of reason.) In contrast, higher animals develop their instincts through play. Long before a kitten actually captures a mouse, it practices the act by playing with a ball or a wad of paper. The more sophisticated the animal, the longer the play-dominated stage. Simple play, Groos theorized, is nature’s way of preparing the young of higher animals for the demands of life.<sup>34</sup>

Other scholars believe that some innate tendency not only motivates young humans to play but also systematizes play. For instance, British psycholo-

gist Hall in 1916 suggested that a child’s play passes through a series of stages that mirrors the cultural epochs of the human race. That is, the child progressively reenacts in play the animal, savage, nomadic, agricultural, and tribal stages of human development.<sup>35</sup>

### Psychological Interpretations

Attempts to explain human behavior, including play, in psychological terms began in the late 19th century with interpretations based on a belief in inborn instincts as the force that drives behavior. In the early 1920s, McDougall, a British psychologist, was the chief exponent of the view that instincts are related to certain organisms’ fundamental appetites, desires, and inner energies.<sup>36</sup> Although McDougall would have placed play in this category, he viewed the tendency to play as secondary to such basic instincts such as fear, anger, and hunger.

Another advocate of the play-as-instinct theory was American physician-turned-psychologist James, who wrote:

A boy can no more help running after another boy who runs provokingly near him, than a kitten can help running after a rolling ball .... All simple games are attempts to gain excitement yielded by certain primitive instincts .... Their special rules are habits, discovered by accident, selected by intelligence, and propagated by tradition.<sup>37</sup>

Other psychologists of the 1920s rejected this notion and instead suggested a *reflex* or mechanistic theory of play.<sup>38</sup> A reflex is a simple segment of behavior in which a direct and immediate response occurs to a particular stimulus. In contrast, an instinct is more complex and does not function as quickly or as automatically as a reflex. Furthermore, an instinct is seen to have an element of continuity because it covers a longer period than a reflex does. The instinct theorists assumed that play is a powerful innate tendency, whereas the reflex theorists assumed that play is triggered by a series of reflexes that are modified and become more complex through experience. Both the instinct and reflex theories of play have long since been abandoned.

Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, posited that the behavior of the human infant is governed by the pleasure principle, a concept based on tension reduction (i.e., energy must be instantly discharged to prevent the buildup of tension). The discharge normally occurs through reflex actions that are inherent and automatic. When discharge of energy by this means is impossible, an alternative process, such as play, permits the discharge.<sup>39</sup>

By the middle of the 20th century, the term *instinct* had become unpopular with psychologists, and the term *drive* was used in its place to describe the supply of energy that puts an organism into motion. Drive primarily describes behavior directed toward eliminating physiological deprivation or moving away from noxious conditions. Subsequently, psychologists began to use the broader term *motive*, which has many meanings but which encompasses both conscious and unconscious reasons for behavior.

Among the factors that are considered to motivate play is the desire to belong, to undergo new experiences, to achieve recognition, and to express oneself.

American psychiatrist Menninger in 1960 noted the role of play, specifically competitive sports, in facilitating the release of aggression: “Competitive games provide an unusually satisfactory social outlet for the instinctive aggressive drive. Psychiatrists postulate the existence in the personality of an aggressive energy drive, which constantly seeks expression.”<sup>40</sup>

### Sociological Interpretations

In the mid-1800s, interest began to grow in examining the roles that human groups and institutions play in the lives of individuals. Out of this interest was born the field of sociology. Sociology is the study of the development, structure, interaction, and collective behavior of organized groups of human beings.

At the same time, the industrial revolution—the shift from a chiefly agrarian to a chiefly industrial economy—took hold and began to sweep through western Europe and North America. By the early 20th century, this massive transformation not only had brought about fundamental changes in the economy of these regions but also had caused significant social restructuring, not always for the good of everyone. As cities developed around the great manufacturing sites, the tenements built to house workers rapidly degenerated into filthy slums that were breeding grounds for poverty, crime, and disease.

Several social reformers sought public and private support for their efforts to alleviate these problems. In North America, one result of this endeavor was the birth of the recreation movement; this will be examined later in more detail. At the same time, an earnest effort had begun to ascertain the role of play in the socialization of both young people and adults.

In the 1920s, Lee, an American philosopher and a leader in the American recreation movement, identified the need to belong as the factor that motivates play. He believed that play satisfies this need because, when people play together with a common

cause, they fully and meaningfully experience the satisfactions of membership in a group.<sup>41</sup>

A decade later, Mead posited that the social conditions under which one’s sense of self emerges are illustrated in play and in the game. Play begins as unsystematized movements in the very young child and is described in the myths of primitive peoples. The game, in contrast, is much more complex and requires not only an understanding of the rules but also adherence to them. To play the game correctly, the child (or the uninitiated adult) must incorporate into the self the values, attitudes, and expectations of all others who are involved in the game.<sup>42</sup>

Mead used his theory to develop his well-known concept of the *generalized other*. This concept is defined as the totality of attitudes and values of one’s group or social circle whose judgment is used as a standard for one’s own behavior. Play and games are the vehicles through which the individual internalizes the values and norms of the group, the community, and ultimately the society.

### Cultural Interpretations

Cultural interpretations of play consider the relationship of play to the customs and symbols of a given society. Roberts and Sutton-Smith believe that play aids the child not only in understanding his or her culture but also in sustaining it.<sup>43</sup>

Huizinga, a Dutch historian of the 1950s, believed that forms of play have permeated almost all human activities since the dawn of civilization and that play has helped humankind create society: “For many years the conviction has grown upon me that civilization arises and unfolds in and as play.”<sup>10</sup>

Huizinga emphasized the relationship between ritual and play. He believed that the spirit of play exists in many rituals, a concept explored in Chapter 2.

Edward’s analysis of play behavior in children from different cultural backgrounds shows that cultural norms mediate role playing, games with rules, and creative play.<sup>44</sup>

### Recent Theories

More recently some scholars focused on the developmental approach to play, which emphasizes the child’s attempt to master reality. According to Erikson, “Child’s play is an infantile form of the human ability to deal with experience by creating model situations and to master reality by experimenting and planning.”<sup>45</sup>

In this view, a child’s play is centered on himself or herself. In the second year of life, the scope of play broadens as the child begins to examine objects outside the self. In preschool years, the child learns to physically manipulate his or her body and outside objects to master social interaction.



Swiss psychologist Piaget viewed play as part of cognitive development, as essentially an attempt at assimilation over accommodation. Whereas assimilation is the repetition of familiar activities and the distortion of reality to match existing forms of thought, accommodation is the process by which thoughts and behaviors are altered to meet the demands of reality. Play is imitative; thus, it facilitates assimilation. Piaget identified three stages of play in a child's cognitive development: sensorimotor (relating to sensory and motor nerve pathways), symbolic/fantasy, and cooperative.<sup>46</sup>

Marano, a contemporary scholar, believes the human brain contains a "play center."<sup>47</sup> Turner had suggested half a century ago that there is a connection between play and ritual, an idea that supports both biological and cultural interpretations of play, as follows: "Room for play ... abounds in many kinds of tribal rituals, even in funerary ritual. There is play of symbol vehicles leading to the construction of bizarre masks and costumes ... there is a play of meanings ... there is play with words."<sup>48</sup>

Play activities are dominant in the early stages of life, after which they give way to pursuits such as study and work. Once an adult's basic needs have been satisfied through work-related endeavors, he or she seeks activities that in and of themselves provide pleasure and enjoyment. The best-known illustration of this concept is Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (Figure 1.2).<sup>2</sup> At the upper levels of this figure are needs whose satisfaction goes beyond work and even beyond play.

Play theory scholar Sutton-Smith authored the landmark book, *The Ambiguity of Play* (1997), which became a standard in play theory. Maintaining that a definition of play must include adults as well children, he finds that the interpretation of play must involve all of its forms from child's play to gambling, including sports, festivals, imagination, and nonsense. In his early years, he saw that play provided a more exciting place for a player/spectator to live in, at least for a time. As his data collected, he learned that play is more than pleasure or fun. The positive experience tends to carry over to people's feelings about everyday life, making it possible to live more fully despite negative trends facing them.<sup>49</sup> He believes that the opposite of play is not work, it is depression. His developing theories have led to his definition of play:

Play begins as a mutation of real conflicts and functions thusly forever afterwards. Play was always intended to serve a healing function whether for child or adult making it more worthwhile to defy the depressing and dangerous aspects of life. Play is neurologi-

cally a reactive itch of the amygdala, one that responds to archetypal shock, disgust, and sadness. But play also includes triumphant control and happiness and pride. Play begins as a major feature of mammalian evolution and remains as a major method of becoming reconciled with our being within our present universe. In this respect, play resembles sex and religion, two other forms—however temporary or durable—of human salvation in an earthly box.<sup>49</sup>

Another current theory suggests that society can break down when people do not participate in play. Psychologist Gray believes that playing well means learning to see the world from the vantage point of others. In self-organized play for instance, children learn to get along with diverse others, to compromise, and to anticipate and meet the needs of others. He believes play helps people with the most important skill for social life, how to please others while still fulfilling one's own needs.<sup>50</sup>

### Concept Check

- *Define play.*
- *Give one example each of a biological and a psychological interpretation of play.*

## In Search of a Theory

In 1980, Crandall, seeking to identify the factors that motivate leisure, recreation, and play, listed the clusters shown in Table 1.1.<sup>51</sup> In 1991, Driver, Brown, and Peterson presented the following findings in a volume titled *Benefits of Leisure*.<sup>9</sup>

- Studies document strong interest in engaging in regular physical activity.
- Research findings, although limited, suggest that people recuperate from stress more rapidly in an outdoor setting than in an urban environment.
- Spirituality appears to be expressed during leisure time in a variety of ways.
- Leisure activities appear to be associated with positive outcomes in family interaction, satisfaction, and stability.
- There is conceptual and empirical support for leisure opportunities as contributors to satisfactory community life.

Now that working definitions of three key terms—leisure, recreation, and play—have been

established, Chapter 2 will explore the evolution of recreation and leisure from prehistoric times to the present.

**Table 1.1**

*Factors That Motivate Leisure, Recreation, and Play*

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◆ Enjoying nature, escaping civilization	◆ Contact with family members
◆ Escaping from routine and responsibility	◆ Recognition, status
◆ Physical exercise	◆ Social power
◆ Creativity	◆ Altruism
◆ Relaxation	◆ Stimulus seeking
◆ Self-improvement	◆ Self-actualization
◆ Social contact	◆ Challenge, achievement, competition
◆ Meeting new people	◆ Aesthetics, intellectual stimulation
◆ Contact with prospective mates	◆ Killing time, boredom

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## Summary

- ◆ In contrast to play, leisure is a phenomenon that is peculiar to humans and that can be viewed as residual time, as particular activities, or as a state of mind.
- ◆ Recreation is an active/participative way to experience leisure.
- ◆ Recreational opportunities are available in several structured settings: public, commercial, corporate, and therapeutic.
- ◆ In its simplest form, play appears to be a universal phenomenon that is witnessed among the young of higher animals and humans.
- ◆ Theories of play are of five main types: biological, psychological, sociological, cultural, and recent ones.
- ◆ It may be impractical to apply rigorous scientific analysis to the study of leisure, recreation, and play, but it is possible to create clusters of factors that motivate people to engage in these pursuits.



## Using What You've Learned

1. Select four young people: a toddler, a 5-year-old, a 9-year-old, and a teenager. Observe each of them at play. Which of the play theories you learned in this chapter apply to each young person's play? Report your observations in class.
2. Select eight adults of both sexes but of different ages and backgrounds. In what ways do their ways of playing differ from each other's and from the play you observed in the younger group? Prepare a brief report for class.

## Your Turn

1. What factors that you have learned about in this chapter do you think motivate Chris Makos to play soccer with such dedication and intensity? What factors might explain John Shu's passion for developing technical skills in chess and tennis?
2. What John sees as enjoyable and stimulating, Chris experiences as painstaking and tedious; what John sees as grueling and dangerous, Chris is passionate about. What interpretation of leisure explains why these two best friends have such radically different ideas of what constitutes the ideal leisure-time pursuit?
3. What similarities and/or differences can you identify in your favorite leisure pursuits and those of your closest friend?

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