

Philosophical Perspectives on Leisure, Play and Sport

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Samevatting

Deur erkenning te verleen aan die veelsydige aard van vryetyd, spel en sport beoog hierdie artikel om te besin oor die samehang tussen werk, verskillend-geaarde samelewingsvorme en die sosiale bedding van die verskynsels wat in die titel vermeld word. Die aard van tyd asook van die uiteenlopende wyses van omgang en verkeer word opgehelder met die oog daarop om lig te werp op die historiese ontwikkeling van “vryetyd” na die industriële omwenteling (met inbegrip van die stryd vir ‘n korter werksweek). Ten slotte word die reikwydte van vryetyd en die kwaliteit van die lewe opgemeet.

1. Introduction

Assuming that the distinctive hall-mark of scholarly (scientific) activities is given in the feature of *modal abstraction* at once explains why the modal aspects (functions) of reality serve as *gateways* or *points of entry* in an analysis of societal phenomena such as leisure, play and sport. Naturally an analysis of the meaning of leisure, play and sport will require a more detailed account of terms such as *being human*, *society*, *sport*, *work*, *leisure (free time)*, and *reality* – although a full account of all these terms will exceed the boundaries of this article.

2. A multidisciplinary approach to sport events

When Lüschen discusses sport as an institution and its “overlaps with other societal institutions” he actually engages in an analysis of various aspects of sport and of its interconnection with other societal spheres. He looks at the “*economic dimension*” (1981:6), the “*political dimension*”, the “*religious dimension*” the “*educational dimension*” (1981:7), the “*cultural*” (1981:8) and then also focuses on key elements of the structure of sport within societies

(1981:9 ff.). In respect of the latter he particularly discusses “socialization and sport” (1981:10) and “conflict and conflict resolution” in sport (1981:11). But suppose we invite a multidisciplinary team of scientists to investigate what happened during the recent Olympic Games held in Athens.

- ◆ The physicist, for example, would only be interested in questions concerning the *tempo*, *acceleration* and *strength* of the athletes.
- ◆ The biologist, on the other hand, would focus on the importance of different *organs* and *muscles* crucial to athletic performance (think about an appropriate diet or the exercise program destined to enhance the performance of particular muscles).
- ◆ The psychologist would be interested in the *motivation* and *emotional stability* of the athletes. For example, what is the effect of *stress* on performance?
- ◆ High-level participation in many instances requires thorough *planning* and *tactics*, it ought to be thought through well (the logical analytical aspect as point of entry).
- ◆ By paying attention to the *historical development* of sport the historian may provide us with an insight in the historically significant changes in specific kinds of sport and correlate them with the data of the book of records.
- ◆ The domain of athletics developed its own universe of discourse with a distinct terminology, syntax and semantics – all elements relevant to the interest of general linguistics (the relevance of the sign-mode).
- ◆ Of course, also the sociologist would have its own peculiar interest in athletics. For example, is there any correlation between *social status/position/rank* and athletics participation? What are the effects of competition and success upon other phenomena within society? Is there any intrinsic relation between athletics and the capitalistic spirit of competition permeating the modern Western (and even Global) society? What form is given to *social power* and *social control* in different sporting bodies? Can it happen that sport bodies may abuse their power in service of certain external (political) aims?
- ◆ The economist will not only be interested in the ever-increasing prices of sport equipment but also in the career possibilities provided by professional sport. Athletes who perform exceptionally well may be concerned about sufficient financial support from sporting bodies or even the home countries (just think about the four golden swimmers of South Africa).

- ◆ The style and beauty of athletic bodily positions did not escape the eye of many artists – exemplified in many paintings and sculptures.
- ◆ In an era of professional sport proper care and attention has to be given to the jurial side of sport activities. Applicable rules have to be observed (for example regarding the use of steroids – just recall the event where the gold in discus in Athens 2004 was withdrawn owing to an inconsistency in urine samples), while the human rights of athletes ought not to be violated through contracts or the way in which sport events are organized. The subdivision of legal science investigating the jurial side of sport understandably has recently gained in importance, particularly because sport plays an important role in globalisation. Of course globalisation as a process is far less coherent than a culturally directed process (see Jarvie, 1994:250).
- ◆ The science of ethics surely also has its own distinctive focus. Sport ethics highlight the moral obligations involved in participating in sport.
- ◆ Of course an athletic event also functions within the certitudinal mode of reality, the aspect of faith, which delimits the angle of approach from which theology investigates reality. Every athlete lives according to his/her *sport credo*. Such a *sport credo* embraces the ultimate convictions of an athlete regarding what could be expected from and achieved by sport. It therefore often gives direction to the career of an athlete. Surely, one does not have to identify convictions about the nature, purpose and meaning of sport with ultimate *religious commitments*, except when someone ends up by idolizing sport, by elevating it to the level of a pseudo-God.

From this brief analysis we have to realize that also sport events display a typical *totality character* peculiar of all societal phenomena. It entails that social events have functions in *all* aspects of reality. This insight ought to guide us in an analysis of leisure, play and sport.

3. Discerning societal type-laws

In order to distinguish different *kinds* of societal phenomena the dimension of entities within reality comes into focus. Society differentiates into various *types* of societal relationships and the most basic way to distinguish between these *types* is to find the aspect (modal function) which *qualifies* the *type* concerned. The method of analysis needed to discern these different types entail that we identify the *type-laws* lying at the *foundation* of the societal

phenomena we experience. The technical term for the underlying law-types making our experience of concrete phenomena possible is *transcendental*. The *method* employed is therefore the *transcendental-empirical* method – applicable to both the natural sciences (see for example Stafleu, 1980) and disciplines within the domain of the humanities (see for example Hommes, 1972, 1976, 1981, 1986). This expression simply says that we conduct an investigation into the nature of those conditions (type-laws) which *make possible* whatever we can *experience*.

For example, atoms conform to the *type-law* for *being-an-atom*. Therefore the experience of an atom is made possible by this *condition* or *type-law* holding for each and every atom we can experience.

What is decisive is an experiential understanding of the nature of societal relationships *preceding* whatever *method* one may want to employ. No method as such can *determine* the nature of something under investigation. Rather, every method is fully dependent upon the *nature* of what is investigated and should therefore be accompanied by a prior underlying pre-understanding of what is scientifically elucidated.

The *business firm*, for example, represents a *type* of societal institution which is *qualified* by the *economic* aspect of reality. Although the state definitely also has a function in the economic aspect of reality, it is not qualified by this aspect. As a public legal institution the state is qualified by the *jurial aspect* – it has to harmonize the multiplicity of legal interests – such as the dignity of a person and the property belonging to a person – within the territory of the state into one public legal order and restore any violation of this balance caused by an infringement upon rights in a truly *retributive* way. In order to achieve this end the state ought to maintain *civil* and *criminal* courts and it has to have the monopoly over the *sword power* on its territory (the police force within its territorial boundaries and the military power – infantry, navy and air force – to prevent invasions by an aggressor from the outside). Maintaining law and order or even fighting a (defensive) war surely is – viewed from an economic perspective – a dead loss! Therefore the state does not operate on the basis of an *economic profit motif* but simply budget for the necessary expenses required to accomplish its legal task through taxes.

States conform to this *type-law* for being a state, whereas the firm is conditioned by its own *economically* qualified *type-law*. Similarly, sport as phenomenon is qualified by the *social aspect* of reality. Actually we have to broaden our perspective and say that *leisure* in the widest sense of the term is qualified by the *social aspect* of reality. This encompasses derived social activities such as *tourism, play, sport* and *recreation*.

Beyond the claim that “sociology is the study of social order” (Loy and Kenyon, 1981:5) the analysis of these authors merely attempts to delineate the domain of *sport sociology* without actually succeeding in providing a clear-cut *definition* of sport. They do speak about the “social significance of sport” (Loy and Kenyon, 1981:6), but in the absence of a theory of *modal aspects* and *societal type-laws* they fail to appreciate the *social aspect* as the *qualifying function* of sport.

4. Time and society

It often occurs that leisure is negatively defined as the *time left after work* (see Parker, 1976:12). While *work* becomes the decisive determinant, non-work implicitly derives its nature from work. Parker discusses work-leisure relationships in general descriptive terms such as “identity”, “contrast” and “separateness” (1995:29 ff.). He concludes by confessing, with reference to the relationship between “work and non-work,” that “we do not yet know much about the pathways underlying such relationships, their direction of causality, or relative strength” (1995:36). Clearly he does not bring into play the *modal irreducibility* of the social, the economic and other aspects of reality as a guideline – for then at least he would have realized that *different aspects* cannot be juxtaposed in a cause-effect relation (compare our remark concerning Kant’s distinction between *succession* and *causality* below).

But work normally occurs within an *economic* context – careers and jobs generate the income required to survive economically within society. Yet this does not mean that the economic motive involved in *work* entails that non-work could be captured in (negative) economic terms as well. Rather, one has to consider other possible qualifying functions as well in order to understand the nature and context of *free time*.¹ But before expanding this point, a few remarks about the nature of *time* might be appropriate.

Physicists tend to monopolize the question about time – they think that time is purely and exclusively physical in nature. But what about the student who looked at a fascinating movie and came out with the remark that the two hours *felt* like *ten minutes*! Is this *time-experience* unreal? But then what about the *jural case* where a law is promulgated with *retroactive*

1 Tribe emphasizes “free time” as an element of leisure: “A common element in many definitions of leisure is that of free time”. “Leisure = discretionary time”. Recreation = pursuits undertaken in leisure time.” “Tourism = visiting at least one night for leisure and holiday, business and professional or other tourism purposes” Tribe (1995:2).

effect!)? Are we not here confronted with a different *mode of time* which actually reverses the arrow of time by affecting events in the past? (In other instances *jural time* simply skips public holidays and therefore does not follow the physical succession of days.) And what about the *time-order* of a *reversible* numerical progression (the positive and negative direction of integers)? or the *reversibility* of the kinematic time-order (compare the movement of a pendulum)?²

What are the most basic intuitions we have in connection the experience of time? *Succession* first comes to mind, since the oldest known civilizations counted the succession of days, weeks, months and years. Eventually *simultaneity* surfaced in the construction of sundials. Only then the history of time-measurement witnessed the genesis of *mechanical* clock-works exploring the *constancy* of the kinematical time-order. Employing the irreversibility of the *physical time-order* came into place only during the 20th century (after the discovery of physical irreversibility) with the invention of atomic clocks. The physical time-order is exemplified in radio-activity which occurs in one direction only.

These time intuitions are all different although they do exist in mutual coherence. *Succession* (number), *simultaneity* (space), *constancy* (kinematical) and *change* (physical) bring to expression different *modes of time* which are irreducible.

Kant also sensed this difference in his realization that *succession* is not the same as change (*cause* and *effect*). One cannot infer from the *succession* of day and night or night and day that the day (or: night) is the *cause* of the night (or: day)!

What ought to be acknowledged is that *time* constitutes a *unique dimension* of reality – alongside the dimensions of *modal functions* (aspects) and that of *entities* (things, plants, animals, human beings, societal relationships and events). The intersection of the dimension of time with the rest of reality explains the expression *temporal reality*. Furthermore, as we have commenced to note in connection with the first

2 Simply switching the sign will change an equation of movement into its opposite movement – for example, an expanding system will be changed into a contracting system.

3 Immanuel Kant, the genius of the Enlightenment of the 18th century, captured the rich tradition by distinguishing the following three modes of time (coinciding with what we have highlighted as numerical, spatial and kinematical time): “Die drei modi der Zeit sind Beharrlichkeit, Folge und Zuegleichsein (1787:219). [“The three modes of time are duration, succession and simultaneity (co-existence)”]

four aspects and the history of time-measurement, this time dimension expresses itself within each aspect of reality according to the unique nature of that aspect. Nonetheless no single aspect can exhaust the full meaning of time. There is also always a strict correlation between the law-side and the factual side of time⁴

In addition to the way in which the dimension of time expresses itself within the aspects of nature it also permeates the normative aspects (from the logical aspect up to and including the certitudinal aspect). A logical argument proceeds from premisses to a conclusion, in spite of the fact that the lingual formulation of this argument may revert the order lingually by first mentioning the conclusion and then formulating the grounds for it. New historical periods emerge as the result of normatively correct or antinormative events (reformational events on the one hand or revolutionary / reactionary tendencies on the other hand). Modern industrial life is structured according to the demands of *economic time*. The figure of *interest* is a characteristic example of economic time, not to forget the well-known expression: “time is money.” The accountable human freedom to explore the domain of *social time* lies at the basis of all *leisure activities*. Of course the matrix of normativity within which leisure ought to take place allows for a rich diversity, flexibility and changefulness – but never at the cost of an underlying element of constancy. The postmodern reaction to the concept of leisure overlooks the conditioning role of constancy for change.⁵

However, in order to explore our understanding of this area further we first of all need to come to terms with the various kinds of *social interaction* taking place within human society.

5. Various kinds of social interaction

The durable organization of any social life-form receives its *maximum specification* when it shares in *both* of the following characteristics:

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- 4 Take as an example the biotical time-order of birth, growth, maturation, ageing and dying. Correlated with this time-order on the law-side of the biotical aspect we find the factual duration of individual plants, animals and human beings which can vary from a perennial life-span of one year up to more than thousand years in the case of some trees. In no single case can the biotical duration of a living entity escape from the determining and delimiting hold of the said biotical time-order.
 - 5 Rojek writes: “Postmodernity means boundlessness and protean flexibility; leisure is a modernist concept and refers to a bounded category of practice and experience” (1995:146).

- (i) a solidary unitary character, and
- (ii) a permanent authority structure.⁶

For example, in the case of a university both lecturers and students are constantly changing without terminating the *durability* or *continued existence* of the university as such. A permanent structure of authority is present whenever there is a relation of super- and subordination between an office-bearer and those subjected to the power vested in the office concerned (like between the *government* of the state and the *subjects* of that state).

The Afrikaans/Dutch/German term denoting the combination of (i) and (ii) is “verband.” Unfortunately the English language has no suitable *translational equivalent* for this word. Initially the author has tried to capture its connotation by introducing the term *consociation* – under the stipulation that it is intended to refer to all those forms of social interaction which exhibit both features (i) and (ii). But perhaps the simplest term serving the same purpose will be the word *collectivity*. Examples of *social collectivities* (“verbande”) are the *state*, the *church*, the *firm*, the *school*, the *university*, the (nuclear) *family*, the *art association*, the *sports club*, the *cultural association* and the *language association*.

The state possesses a durable relation of super- and subordination (of government and subject – i.e., a permanent authority structure). It entails that the *unity* and *identity* of a state is not abolished by the exchange of its citizens (either office-bearers or subjects). The same applies to all the other collective life-forms that we have named in the list of examples.

When societal structures possess only *one* of these characteristics, we call them *communities*. A *nation* (“volk”/“people”) and the *extended family* possess a *solidary unitary character* (that is why there may be continuity between the nation of a hundred years ago and the nation of today in spite of changes), but *no permanent authority structure* can be indicated. The *marriage community* does possess a permanent authority structure, although a solidary unitary character is absent. In terms of these distinctions neither a state, nor a province, nor a rural town is a *community*. With reference to the *state-side* of the given facts, we are working with (higher or lower) forms of governmental authority – and therefore with subordinate and superordinate relations which are absent

6 This first property captures the durability of any societal structure irrespective of the flow (coming and going) of individual members.

from the community with only a solidary unitary character. In reality a city and a town exhibit an interlacement of diverse collectivities, communities as well as what we can call *coordinational* relationships. The expression *coordinational relationships* intends to reflect what is meant by the Dutch term “maatschap.” This Dutch term “maatschap” also does not have a suitable English equivalent. The intended kind of relationship surely does not have a *permanent authority structure*, nor does it possess a *solidary unitary character*. It concerns social interaction normally related to phenomena of friendship, partnership, fellowship, mate, pal, peer, and the choice we have to *associate freely* with an accountable will. For the lack of a better alternative, we propose to employ the term *coordinational* – with the intention to include those connotations shared by the phenomena referred to in the previous sentence – which in fact are all instances of *coordinational relationships*.

However, coordinational relationships not only concern the inter-relationships between *individuals* who act on equal footing next to and sometimes in opposition to each other, since these relations also embrace interaction on an equal footing prevailing between different *communal* and *collective* societal structures.

5.1 An unbreakable correlation

There are two sides to the coin of social interaction: on the one hand we find collective and communal relationships and as their correlate we have coordinational relationships. No person merely lives in the former or exclusively in the latter. Sociological *atomism* / *individualism* absolutizes coordinational relationships and sociological *holism* / *universalism* absolutizes collective or communal social relationships.

The so-called *ivory-tower* in which some artists seclude themselves is a well-known example of over-emphasizing coordinational relationships. Ironically enough, this one-sidedness easily turns into its opposite, namely when artists claim that they provide *guidance* to society, that many a war was won by the *poet's pen*!

It should be noted that these distinctions only make sense within *differentiated* societies. It is therefore understandable why Leys argues that within third world countries the role of the state ought to be bigger because “most of the population is still caught up in pre-capitalist production relations, not fully proletarianized or urbanized, relating more directly with other (small commodity) producers, related more directly to nature, and living a correspondingly different symbolic life” (1982:306).

5.2 Societal institutions

In differentiated societies there are various social life-forms which bind their members together for the greater part of their lives in a way which is independent of their will. The state, for example, does not originate in a hypothetical “social contract” – which explains why it can organize the collective life of its citizens independent of their will (think for example about their tax obligations).

All those life-forms which embrace the lives of their members partially or fully for the greater part of their life-span could be called *institutional*. Marriage exhibits an institutional nature because it is meant to constitute the spouses’ marriage relationship for the duration of their lives. A person is born within a family and a circle of relatives and grows up in it without any choice.

Not all collective life-forms possess an *institutional* character. Think only of a *firm*, a *university college* or a *sport club* – all are examples of collectivities which rest totally on *voluntary* membership.

Yet it is impossible for any person to let his or her life be taken up completely in any of the various collectivities and communities in which s/he functions – simply because s/he also takes part in various other inter-relations. Two families, for example, stand in a (n inter-collective) *coordinational* relationship; two married couples in a (n inter-communal) *coordinational* relationship. Furthermore, every individual, in a differentiated society, is taken up in countless inter-individual coordinational relationships where s/he informally relates with fellow humans in coordinate relations. Conversely, no one’s life is exclusively involved in coordinational relationships, because correlate of the latter is found in the institutional and non-institutional collectivities and communities in which one is involved.

Classifying social interaction in terms of these three forms, namely *collective*, *communal* and *coordinational*, does not yet distinguish the *typical* differences in existence between a group of collectivities, a number of communities or different coordinational relationships. That is to say, this classification does not fully capture the implied *type-laws* of these societal realities.

6. Leisure within human society

We are now in a position to reflect upon the nature of *leisure* because we have obtained a brief acquaintance with the *multifaceted* nature of reality

and with the *structural differentiation within human* society. All along we have to keep in mind that *being human* is never exhausted in or fully encompassed by any societal relationship – be it collective, communal or coordinational in nature. This follows from the fact that the human selfhood *transcends* the temporal diversity of aspects and societal structures.

It is amazing to see how strong the naturalistic understanding of the human being – as a mere “organism” – is continued within sociological reflections on leisure. Geba, for example, advocates a new leisure model, focused on the difference between “being lived” (nature) and “living life” (the symbolic realm) (Geba, 1982:93). He calls it the lifestyle “Attitude Model” (Geba, 1982:91). “Attitude, then, encompasses the whole organism and its interaction with the environment” (Geba, 1982:98). “The lifestyle attitude of the human organism is made up of the sum [100] total of its motions, sensations, emotions, and thoughts. All are movements, and together they give the life of an individual its personal style” (1982: 99-100). The view that all “are movements” even reminds us of an early phase of the modern humanistic science-ideal where Thomas Hobbes attempted to analyze all of reality in terms of the basic concept of “moving body”!

Already the Greeks conceived of *work* as the precondition of *leisure*. This explains the long-standing legacy of defining *leisure* as *freedom from work*. Jarvie captures an element of this heritage when he writes:

Focussing on the perceived fusion or polarity between work and leisure Parker argues that the former occurs when people refuse to divide up their lives between work and leisure. When polarisation does occur the corresponding functions of leisure are identified as ‘spillover’ or compensatory. Work may be said to spill over into leisure to the extent that leisure is the continuation of work [22] experiences and attitudes. In some instances leisure activities ‘compensate’ for the dissatisfactions felt in work (1994:21-22).

Since the Latin root *licere* originally means *to be permitted* (freedom) and to be *regulated* (constraint) it is also understandable why leisure cannot be divorced from *normativity* (norms permit certain actions while regulating/prohibiting others). This link with *normativity* at once makes it plain why the *time* implied in leisure can never be reduced to mere (a-normative) *physical* time – although we have to acknowledge that all forms of *social time* are founded in *physical time*.

A closer look at what could be called *unoccupied* (spare) *time* or *free time* soon unveils that the opposite kind of time, namely *occupied time*, actually

relates to different *kinds* of the collective or communal functioning of individuals. Within each collectivity or community individuals only come into focus as *parts* (members) of a larger *societal whole* and never as *individuals in their own right*. Consequently, the societal domain where so-called “free time” can surface *par excellence* is within the area of *coordinational relationships*.

But we have noted that one crucial characteristic of coordinational relationships is that they lack a relation of super- and subordination, that is to say, they do not have office-bearers capable of exercising *authority* or *power*. The inherent (coordinational) social freedom characteristic of leisure therefore excludes the nature of *force* (the exercise of power and control) which of course does not mean that leisure falls outside the matrix of normativity!

* Just as little as one can *force* someone to be *free* – as Rousseau claimed in his *Contrat Social* (1762) – is it possible to *enforce* leisure.

We have noted above that collective and communal relationships always find their *counter-part* in coordinational relationships. Since *work* normally takes place within some or other collective or communal relationship, and since leisure by its very nature belongs to the domain of coordinational relationships, it must be clear from the very outset that there can never be an *either/or* choice between the two. It is just as meaningless to opt for a life merely and solely constituted by work as it is to opt for a life of leisure without any communal and collective demands whatsoever.

The argument we want to advance is therefore not to introduce a privileged position to *work* over against *leisure* or vice versa. This would simply be tantamount to a distortion of the unbreakable correlation between collective and communal relationships on the one hand and coordinational relationships on the other hand.

Murphy mentions that in terms of a “structural-functional paradigm ... leisure is primarily residual instead of an integral part of life” (1987:11). Alternatively he advocates a holistic approach: “Emerging holistic models based on enlightened research into the human condition suggest that the needs of the person determine what will be intrinsically motivating and therefore what constitute the leisure experience” (1987:16).

Nonetheless we have to be careful not to allow “human needs” to level the structural differences between different kinds of societal relationships, for as soon as *coordinational relationships* are acknowledged as *basic* (*constitutive*) for social life it is no longer possible to define leisurely

activities as a *derivative* of work obligations or as a *luxury* which will always compete with collective and communal control.

Embedded in the very nature of coordinational relationships leisurely activities constitute an *inherent* and *integral part* of the *social well-being* of all humans. This position is one of *principle*, one that appreciates leisure in *its own right*.⁷ That is to say, it simply states the *originality*, *uniqueness* and *irreplaceability* of the *coordinational nature* of *leisure* without committing itself to any *specific positive social form* it might have assumed (or will be assuming) within any particular society. In fact, the simple ratio of time allocated to leisure and work constantly varies throughout the history of humankind.

This feature decisively places all forms of leisure first of all within the scope of the *social sciences* (the humanities in a broader sense). Not without good reasons Lanfant therefore already in 1974 said that sociology is obsessed in its search for a definition of *leisure* (1974:180).

Whereas leisure is thus seen as embedded in *socially qualified* coordinational relationships, *commerce* on the other hand should be seen as embodied in *economically qualified* coordinational relationships. *Leisure* and *commerce* are therefore structurally differentiated owing to their respective *modal foci*. Of course when one proceeds from an *economistic* perspective, as Karl Marx did, the only option left is to transform leisure into an *extension of capital* (wealth). He defines leisure in terms of *wealth*: “Wealth is disposable time and nothing more” (“*Reichtum ist verfügbare Zeit und nichts weiter*” Marx, 1983:311).

The opposite (capitalist) extreme is found when Johnson rejects the term *leisure* altogether (as an ideological notion) and instead prefers to “talk about sites of consumption and reproduction of labour power” (quoted by Tomlinson, 1981:65-66).

6.1 Structural changes within modern industrial society

The necessities of life and the yet undeveloped technical and technological skills of humankind left society in a predicament quite different from what emerged through the industrial revolution and the institution of machine technology and automation since the later 18th century.

⁷ Cooper advances a “conception of leisure as activity desired for its own sake” (intrinsic desire)” (1989:66).

The irony of this period of development in Western society is that it was accompanied by a derailed understanding of the task of government derived from the classical liberal idea of the state (Locke) and the classical school in economics (Adam Smith and others).

With the rise of classical physics, a deterministic world-view came to the fore – ultimately implying that whatever happens is *completely determined* by prior causes as comprehended by mathematics and physics. A closed and fully determined nexus of causes and effects evidencing exact *natural laws* seems to be the unavoidable outcome of this rationalistic *natural science-ideal*.

The social theories of Hobbes (1651) and Locke (1690) followed this natural science-ideal in their (mathematical) reconstruction of society from autonomous individuals (the *atoms* of society) by means of a supposed (hypothetical and not historical) *social contract*.

The classical liberal idea of the state, as it was advanced by Locke in his *Two Treatises of Civil Government* (1690), did not consider the *social contract* to represent a *radical break* with the (hypothetical) initial “state of nature.” Locke proceeds from the absolute and inalienable human rights of the individual on *life, liberty* and *property* – which could not be given up through any social contract. These human rights require protection through an organized power in the transition to the civil state. But only two *basic rights* should be given up:

- (i) the right of each individual to do what s/he considers to be necessary for his/her own well-being, and
- (ii) the right to punish an offender (Locke, 1990: 181 – §121).

Consequently, Locke conceives of the civil state as a mere *continuation of the state of nature* protected by an organized maintenance of the civil freedom rights of *life, liberty* and *property*. In order to *maximize* civil freedoms there has to be a *minimum* of governmental interference – the classical liberal doctrine of state withdrawal: *laissez faire, laissez passer*.

Reducing the task of government to a minimum in order to secure a maximum amount of civil freedom caused political theorists to speak about Locke’s *state nihilism*. The classical liberal idea of the state provided subsequent governments with ample grounds for backing off from their *normative* governmental task to protect the *legal interests* of their citizens within all the different societal contexts in which these legal interests manifest themselves. Jeremias Bentham (1748-1832) and James Mill (1773-1836) took the individualistic view of society to its peak with their motto of *the greatest happiness for the greatest number*.

The classical school in economic theory, founded by Adam Smith (1723-1790), explored the dubious “fruits” of Locke’s idea of the state in the economic sphere of society and combined it with the “law” of *supply and demand*. The effect of this “law,” as manifested in the functioning of the *market*, gave rise to the idea of an “invisible Hand” operative in the domain of economic affairs. Mandeville once referred to this fiction as the “fable of the bees” – as if greater prosperity and happiness would ensue when each individual pursue his or her own *self-interest* and *greed* optimally (this is also the way in which Milton Freedman, a prominent American economist of the 20th century, prefers to explain how the classical school elevated these two *vices* of being human to overall human guidelines: *self-interest* and *greed*).

Clearly, the theoretical “guidance” provided by the liberal idea of the state (Locke) and the classical school in economics (Smith), caused the Tory government in England to follow the path of *withdrawing* from any *legal measures* protecting the economic legal interests of labourers. Initially, during the 17th century, the British government managed to *protect* the labourer by means of several labour laws. As late as 1756 a law was promulgated making provision for law courts to determine wages for peace jobs. The seemingly strange phenomenon, nonetheless, is that during the second half of the 17th century a “systematic” repealing of “labour-protecting laws” started to take place in Britain. By 1776, when protests against the “Spinning Jenny” were presented to the *House of Commons*, the latter refused to receive them. The extreme consequence of this process is seen in the legal banning of all labour organizations in 1799!

Thus the latter were left totally vulnerable in the hands of the growing class of (exploiting) capitalistic entrepreneurs.

6.2 Consequences for “labour”: the rise of trade unions

Comfortably forgetting that the thus *distanced* liberal government *neglected* its normative task of integrating the multiplicity of legal interests on its territory into one public legal order of justice, economic theory, motivated by the humanistic science-ideal, believed that all economic relations are governed by *exact natural laws* instead of being ruled by economic *norms* – notably manifest in the “law of supply and demand.” This “law of nature”, ultimately, should be held accountable for the *miserable situation of wage labourers*. Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) and David Ricardo (1772-1823) pursued this path explicitly.

It was within this climate that the modern wage labourer emerged during the industrial revolution. The humanistic science-ideal stripped this labourer from his/her human dignity by reducing him/her to **one** of the *production factors* – alongside buildings, machines and raw material – degraded to the level of an *economic thing*.

Malthus also designated this inexorable law of *supply and demand* as the “iron wage law,” inhibiting any higher wages, since the *gross national product* (GNP) only has a *fixed* amount available for wages. The only solution for this problem was sought in *reducing* the number of laborers, in order to allow a *bigger share* for each one of them from the mentioned fixed amount. By means of *birth control* there would be less labourers – eventual suicide for the increasing number of labourers already leading a life style below the bread-line.⁸

In the meantime these labourers continued to be *human beings*, capable of exploring the *normative* possibilities provided to them in the erection of *trade unions*. The unequivocal aim was to fight for those rights so pertinently neglected by the government. Owing to the guidance of the humanistic science ideal, societies in Western Europe were thus transformed by an increasing *class struggle*. According to Karl Marx this situation is characteristic of the uncontrolled state of nature as it was sketched by Hobbes: a war of all against all! At the same time these circumstances provided “fruitful” soil for the communistic prophecies of Marx himself.

It is within the context of this derailment that Marx found ample material to substantiate his concern for the inhuman conditions prevailing within the industrial arena where women and children were abused by the capitalist class in working days of up to sixteen hours. His concern is that whereas machines were supposed to liberate human beings from routine labour and open up free time, in the hands of the capitalist entrepreneurs, this technology resulted in a massive *enslavement*, simply enhancing the weakening conditions of the *proletariat*.

The subsequent history reveals the story of the rise of trade unions which were established to restore the rights of labourers ignored by governments under the spell of Locke and Smith.

Particularly the radical revolutionary focus of neo-Marxism during the sixties of the 20th century returned to the young Marx in order to

8 Less than a decade ago Corijn still refers to the dominating contemporary ideology where economic laws and market laws are “mystified” as “natural laws” (1998:198).

transcend the fixed situation in Russia while propagating the *perpetual revolution*. Only through the latter it will be possible, so Marcuse and other neo-Marxist authors believe, to secure the road to *freedom, eroticism, play* and *creativity*. The student revolts of the late sixties of the 20th century manifested these convictions which led to a radical rejection of what was considered to be the “establishment.” Neo-Marxism realized that within the welfare state the labourer eventually acquired a *settled position* with constructive benefits from social insurance. Therefore, it directed its focus upon the new generation of students who were still “untied,” without any standing duties and responsibilities. The irony is that all the leaders of these revolts a decade later were fully settled within the “establishment”! The heading of an article in *Time* tells the story of one of these former student leaders: “God is dead, Marx is dead, and I am not feeling too well myself!”

During the first half of the 20th century significant changes occurred within the world of labour and industry. For example, on May 14, 1921 Belgium promulgated a law shortening the work-day to 8 hours and the work-week to 48 hours. Already in 1889 the first of May became an international day dedicated to the struggle for the 8 hour working day.

In the course of this struggle basic human rights slowly but certainly made headway and managed not only to secure a *shortened workday* and *limited working hours* but also *safety* and *security* within the work place and eventually also the *thirteenth pay cheque*. The effect was that more *time* and *money* became available for *leisurely activities*!

Without the power usurpation dominant during the rise of classical capitalism the struggle for regaining “leisure time” surely would not have been so heroic. However, the successes of this battle during the 20th century highlight the quality and preciousness of the newly acquired *leisure time*.

7. The scope of leisure and the quality of life

Although leisure has been portrayed in functional terms (as a means to an end) or has been characterized as some or other kind of activity, we have seen that an accountable structural location of its place cannot bypass the societal distinction between *collective* and *communal* relationships which are always correlated with coordinational relationships – and *leisure* finds its societal “place” within the latter kind of relationships.

It is therefore *not* meant to designate a specific *social class* within society – such as was done by T. Veblen who in a derogative way referred to the

practices of the new “leisure class” of the late 19th and early 20th century. A *class of people* (layer of society) in principle functions within all three modes of social interaction: *collective*, *communal* and *coordinational* and therefore it can never be identified with merely *one* of them.

Depending upon the specific *preferences*, *desires* and *aspirations* of an individual that person may engage in numerous ways in leisurely activities. This spectrum naturally coheres with the full range of normatively differentiated *options* open to free human functioning within all the normative aspects of reality.

Let us take an example from the world of *tourism*. Tourism as such is a prime example of giving shape to the freedom entailed in coordinational leisurely activities. A tourist is not engaged in a (n economically qualified) “money-generating” endeavour though it has become increasingly *expensive* to be a tourist! Of course we must acknowledge that *tourism* is founded in *economic relations*, for without the necessary *economic means* any touring plan would cease to come off the ground. But the economic facet in general never *qualifies* tourist activities.

The tourist is always guided by a rich diversity of *socially differentiated* special *interests*. These may vary by ranging over the entire spectrum of aspects: some tourists are mainly interested in art galleries owing to their aesthetic hobbies or preoccupations; others choose to opt for natural scenery and environments (eco-tourism), flora and fauna, historical or archaeological sites, and so on. Many times these interests are enhanced by special associations advancing these causes by, amongst others things, organizing extensive tours for members of these associations. By contrast, countries with a rich variety of tourist attractions actively market them and thus attract prospective tourists to visit those countries.

The same diversity is present in the normal experience of leisure because the *normative plasticity* of human endeavours cutting across all aspects of reality enables any individual to pursue particular and distinct leisurely goals and to freely and (re-)creatively give shape to the *leisure side* of coordinational relationships. (Recreation always takes place during leisure time.) It is important to remember that not only *individuals* participate in coordinational relationships but also particular *communities* (such as married couples) and *collectivities* (such as the nuclear family or smaller and larger firms, church communities or social clubs). Think about the leisure side of a shopping mall where an individual, a couple or a family can do shopping, or may just enjoy an evening out by exploring restaurants, cinemas, theaters, pubs, discos, and so on.

The *quality of life* is not merely constituted by leisure since the *meaning of life* is spread over all human endeavours and relationships (including collective and communal relationships). *Happiness* is also not something one can pursue as a *primary* goal. Rather, when something worth-while is carried out and when it is well-done, then happiness may ensue as a *bonus*. Similarly, when leisure is pursued properly and in norm-conformative ways, it may be transformed into an experience of *P-leisure!*

With the immense supply of amusement and recreation many people are tempted into the leisure role of *passive spectators* which may lead, in certain respects – think of unhealthy living patterns – to become a threat to a worthwhile quality of life. This simply emphasizes once more that – like all human activities – leisure may become a false ideological seat, a “pastoral haven” (as it is called by colleague Johan Visagie). By contrast, one should acknowledge that just like all other typically human possibilities leisure represents a *normed* dimension of *social* life. Utilizing leisurely options on the one hand therefore leaves open alternative positive (norm-conformative) options and on the other hand anti-normative deviations as well.

8. The world of exercise and sport

We conclude with a few brief remarks about the nature of *exercise* and *sport*.

An anthropological perceptive on the human being ought to account for the physico-chemical substructure, the biotical substructure, the sensitive substructure and the qualifying though in itself unqualified normative structure of being human. This perspective entails that the original seat of the terms *health* and *illness* is located within the *biotic aspect* of reality. This means that only entities functioning actively within the biotic aspect can be said to be *healthy* or *ill*. Given the peculiar biotical structure of the human body biotical health is dependent upon the frequent and regular use of the body. When this is done in a conscious and purposeful way we encounter *exercise* which ought to be accompanied by the appropriate *nutrition* to be optimally effective. The combination of *nutrition* and *exercise* plays a basic role in the study of sport.

When this situation is approached from the angle of the qualifying normative structure of the human bodily existence, the most general perspective is oriented to the nature of *play*. Though *playfulness* is also observed in animal life, the latter lacks the *accountable freedom* present in human play. This explains why the inherent dynamics and plasticity of

human play could be channeled in various (competitive and non-competitive) directions, from ordinary *games* up to and including highly specialized kinds of *sport*.

Understood within a typical human societal context *play* could be both *aimless* and *purposeful*, could be *relaxing* or *highly demanding*, and could even be *disinterested* or *serious* (see Kurt Riezler, 1981:439-451). Since culture is the *first nature* of being human, *play* actually is a manifestation of this first nature. Consequently, it shares in the *creative fantasy* characteristic of all typical human cultural activities. Structured forms of play therefore demonstrate the rich variations of imaginativity operative as an effect of the creative fantasy of human beings. Just think about the best known *games* and *sports*.

The concept of a *game* is more encompassing than that of *sport*. However, distinguishing between game and sport should avoid the physicalistic or psychological definition of *human action* as a *willed muscle movement*. The inherent *normativity* of human behaviour oftentimes entails the normative *obligation* to act or not to act in a physical way. Our legal practice is acquainted with acknowledging a *commission* as well as an *omission* as *legal acts*.

One cannot argue that chess is just a *game* because no physical activity takes place when one is involved in playing a game of chess. Biochemical research actually showed that although the human brain occupies only 2% of the mass of the human body, it carries 25% of its metabolism (see Plamenac, 1970:444). Playing chess therefore undeniably at least entails physical (brain) activity – not to mention the arm used to move pieces around on the chess board!

A broad definition of sport may even start with *playful movement*. But within sport *playing* is limited by the *rules* of the game and by its *aim*. The energetic and vital urge of participants on the one hand constantly challenge the natural abilities of the athlete/player within the constraints of the rules of a particular sport. The element of competition and the will to conquer the opponent or the natural conditions induces the importance of *exercise* and *training* upon the presupposition of equal chances of all participants. This opens the possibility to emphasize competition, a proper organization of matches and well-adapted rules even by placing less weight on the moulding of movement and bodily development. Thus border cases can be included within the category of sport, such as chess and bridge.

9 The person neglecting the duty to switch the signal for incoming trains from safe to unsafe did not move a muscle but legally did cause the resulting train accident.

The urge to achieve better results and to reach more extreme highs historically led to national and finally international sport. On the one hand it enhanced more specialized studies of the nature of exercise and the techniques required to improve results through effective ways of exercise, while on the other hand this in turn did lead to a situation where the *socially guided* structure of sport partially or totally assumed the nature of a *profession* (the professionalization of sport). All in all this finally led to the involvement of sport organizations and even those instances where states are investing in the development of sport (for example, contribute to the training of athletes before the Olympic games).

The other end of the continuum, where playfulness becomes dominant, opens up *recreative sport* which may even be *non-competitive*. No match – only recreational forms which show similarities with genuine sporting activities.

The highly differentiated nature of modern society embodies a vast diversity of sport practices. The many-sidedness displayed in these practices constantly embodies the intimate connections between social and professionally economic orientations within the leisure dimensions of human society. In this sense *leisure*, though not an all-inclusive enterprise, is co-constitutive for the quality of a life worth living!

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