



The 2011 International Leisure City Development Symposium

Leisure, tourism, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) and other fields have become part of development of many countries worldwide. It is important to focus on localization and internationalization of leisure related industry and research. The World Leisure Organization (WLO) stages “World Leisure Congress” every two years to discuss the tendencies and methods in leisure development. The “2011 International Leisure City Development Symposium” was organized with the aim to promote both localized and internationalized leisure research in Taiwan. The event was organized by the Department of Leisure Management, Minghsin University of Science and Technology, Taiwan. It was held on March 30-April 1, 2011. This symposium was supported by the government of Hsinchu City and the following institutions: Taiwan Leisure Education Association, WLO Chinese Taipei Chapter, Minghsin Office of International Affairs, Minghsin Department of Hotel Management, Minghsin Center of General Education, Minghsin Institute of Service Industries and Management. Four international keynote speakers shared their view on leisure development: knowledge. Derek Casey, chair of the Board of the WLO, from United Kingdom, spoke about “The relevance of leisure to the strategic development of communities, cities and countries.” Roger Coles, a WLO executive committee member, delivered a speech on “Leisure and Wellness: A North American Perspective, With Community Programming Implications.” Peter Chen, a member of the WLO board of directors, from New Zealand, shared his insights into “Leisure and Quality of Life.” Ai-Girl Tan from Singapore read a paper on “Leisure and Creativity: Singapore in Transformation.” Peter Chen provided constant encouragement and assistance in all aspects. The event was well attended by about 300 people and was supported by teachers and students of the university. After the four keynote addresses, local and foreign attendees were invited to participate in a forum “International leisure and leisure city development.” The panel of the forum comprised the keynote speakers (Derek Casey, Roger Coles, Peter Chen, Ai-Girl Tan), the organizer (Yuh-cheng Fan), as well as other eminent leaders of the field: Kao Chin-hsung President, National Taiwan Sport University, Jasson Chiang Director, Physical Education and Sports, Chinese Culture University, K. T. Fann Visiting professor, Yuda University; Chair of the Board of the Taiwan Leisure Education Association, Horace Ho-Mu Chen Honorary Chairman, WLO Chinese Taipei Chapter, and Zeng Kuo-Hsiu Deputy Mayor of Hsinchu City Government. Selected views of the forum are included into this report:

Leisure City Development: A Creative Solution?

Yuh-Cheng Fan

City development has changed the life style, pace of life, and space and time for leisure. With the increasing inhabitants in cities, it is mandatory to develop leisure within city development. Leisure is life. Life without leisure is life without quality, satisfaction and happiness. Leisure city development aims to construct, co-construct and reconstruct spaces of and for leisure. The 2011 International Leisure City Development Symposium organized a forum for experts of various fields to share their views on leisure city development. K. T. Fann reflected upon leisure and city development, which he termed as an oxymoron. He called for a return to the ideal, simple and natural way of life. Derek Casey reviewed the development of city and leisure and question practicality of leisure city development. Y. C. Fan claimed that festivals can be leisure city activities. According to her, festivals are one of the oldest leisure activities of human beings. Ethnic festivals express the essence of traditional culture in every locality. Tourism is an important leisure activity. Participation in festivals has become an important part of tourism. Festival activities often play a crucial role in the development of leisure and tourism in the cities (e.g., the carnival in Venice, Italy; the San Fermin festival in Pamplona, Spain; or the beer festival in Munich, Germany) and make them famous among travelers. Peter Chen discussed the impact of leisure on quality of life and the relationship between the two. Leisure has become more and more important in modern life, both for those with extensive free time, but equally for those with little free time. It is vital that we use our leisure time effectively to improve our quality of life. Leisure is free time available for relaxation, meditation, reflection and leisure activities. These activities can reduce stress levels and create active and healthy lifestyles. Leisure time is an integral part of our lives; it offers the opportunity to make changes, improves our creativity, helps us to discover new hope, inspires lifelong learning, encourages healthy lifestyles and improves the quality of life.

An Oxymoron: On the Development of Leisure City?

K. T. Fann

An oxymoron is a concept that tries to put together two contradictory things which cannot co-exist. A good example is the square-circle. Why do I feel "leisure in the city" is an oxymoron? Leisure in Chinese is "休閒", comprises two picturesque Chinese characters. "休" is a picture of a person standing next to or under a tree and "閒" shows the moon at the door. The first denotes a time when the sun is too hot for work and one can stand under a tree to rest. The other indicates the evening when you do not have to work and sit at the door to enjoy the moon. Both refer to the age of agriculture when humans live and work in harmony with nature. Now let us look at the city. In the modern industrialized society most people are

up-rooted from the countryside. They live and work in highrise buildings cut off from fresh air and greenery. The city is the most un-natural place totally unfit for human wellness. But jobs are in the city, people have no choice but to work in the city. It is no wonder that on weekends and holidays people flee the city and spend their leisure time in the countryside. So, what about developing the leisure city? I think it is an oxymoron. Sure, we can plant more trees, create more parks, organize more cultural events and festivals and so on. But these are only treating the symptoms and not the disease. The city is simply a monstrosity not fit for human living. Many thinkers in the 19th and 20th century (e.g., Marx) sensed the growth of the city as a threat to human wellness. Many social movements attempted to stop the growth of the city on one hand and modernize the countryside on the other (e.g., Maoist China and Castro's Cuba). Much earlier, 25 centuries ago when civilization was just getting started, Laozi sensed the growth of the city contrary to the way of nature, and advocated returning to the simple natural way of life. So, what is the solution? The solution is to return to the simple, natural way of life. There is a glimmer of hope. The computer age has made it possible for more and more people to work at home and perhaps that could allow more people to move back to the countryside.

International Leisure and Leisure City Development?

Derek Casey

The United Nations (UN) recognises *everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay*. (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 24). For billions of people throughout the world this is a mere aspiration as they struggle to survive. However, for billions more, leisure, in its wide variety of forms, is an intrinsic part of their lives providing them with interesting and stimulating ways of enhancing their physical and mental well-being.

The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948. This date could or should be recognized as a watershed between the historical limitations on leisure participation and the "democratization" or "massification" of leisure. The latter has provided new opportunities to take part in sport and recreation, to travel, to attend festivals and artistic events, to experience different cultures and all through a variety of mediums.

It is no coincidence that the growth in leisure (and the expectations for greater leisure) has gone hand in hand with economic development over the same period. Or perhaps, more correctly, the growth in leisure has followed hard on economic development which meeting the UN's aspirations has helped to provide "*reasonable limitations on working hours and periodic holidays with pay*" leading to more rest and involvement in leisure pursuits. It is no coincidence either that the wider

choice of leisure pursuits has paralleled technological change – again over the same period. Television, the internet, the use of social media have raised our knowledge of what is available to complement work, as well as have increased aspirations; improvements to transport and other technologies, relative reductions in cost and enhanced capabilities have often allowed these aspirations to be met. Some 60 years after the UN's Declaration, leisure opportunities and activities have grown exponentially and, as economic development continues (even at a slower pace), it will continue to be an important force in the development of individuals, cities and countries.

City Development

Alongside the growth in leisure worldwide, has been the continuing growth of cities. This, of course, predates considerably the UN Declaration in 1948. The Industrial Revolution of the 17th and 18th Centuries marks the transition from an agricultural to industrial base for so many countries and cities. It is important to remember that those cities which originally developed a strong industrial, manufacturing or distribution base were those which were differentiated by their access to natural resources or had a key geographical advantage or had a strategic political location. With changes to technology, especially in transport and subsequently in manufacturing techniques and distribution capabilities, there has been less focus on the natural physical advantages of cities and more concentration on those all those qualities and ingredients which should be part of the strategic plan and development of a modern city. These (often in rank order) include access to markets, availability of well-educated staff, quality of telecommunications, transport links with other cities and internationally, value for money for and availability of office space, the climate created by Government through tax policies or financial incentives, languages spoken, ease of travelling around the city, the quality of life for employees, freedom from pollution. Importantly these are the same factors which often influence companies to relocate or expand in specific cities and which, collectively, today are the factors which differentiate one city from another.

Quality of Life

Of all these factors, the newest and fastest growing is that of "*quality of life for employees.*" This is a wider factor than leisure, as it relates also to other indices such as health and housing. Nonetheless, we are beginning to see that a key feature of any developed city is leisure provision and the recognition of the role which leisure in all its forms plays in a healthier, fairer, smarter, greener and wealthier urban community.

Leisure City?

The theme for discussion is related to the development of "Leisure Cities." I have some difficulty with this precise concept or title. It could range from thinking about

a city such as Las Vegas where the economy revolves around one form of leisure activity or a vacation resort devoted to tourists or a retirement community. Even in these locations leisure may be the eventual outcome but only when supported by a strong local infrastructure. I believe a better concept is to think of the role of leisure in economic and social development bound together within strategic planning and development. As such, the recognition of a "leisure city" internationally begins with the domestic community. If good provision is made for the local community then the attraction of the international community (whether tourists or investors) is easier and more sustainable. As such, the strategy for domestic and international development in any city should be the same; if achieved then the two elements are mutually reinforcing and supportive.

While we might look back over 60 years in the growth of leisure opportunities, in fact the leisure profession, leisure research and leisure practice are all relatively young in relation to the other areas of expertise involved in urban planning and development. What an opportunity there is today for leading cities to recognize the role of leisure in differentiating it from its competitors; for leisure to recognize its responsibilities in identifying its role in the economic and social development of cities around the world.

A Message: Leisure and Quality of Life

Peter Chen

Leisure and Change

Leisure is an important core of our lives and is also an integral part of our social, cultural and economic wellbeing. Leisure is one of the best ways to make changes and to improve our quality of life. It initiates optimal opportunities for people to seek changes. It provides time for people to think freely, naturally and spontaneously. And it frees people to engage in experiences that enrich the quality and well being of life. The concept of leisure fits well with the Taoist philosophy refined by Lao Tzu. It says everything in the universe is about change and when we deal with change we should work with it peacefully, gracefully, and harmoniously and avoid unnecessary conflict.

Leisure and Golden Mean

Leisure also applies the idea of Golden Mean encouraging us to find the middle way between two extremes. Confucius believed in the Golden Mean, suggesting there are two extremes in every deed. Similarly, Buddha taught the middle way. Aristotle also advocated the doctrine of the mean. At either extreme, individuals may lack happiness and harmony in their lives. Socrates stated, "A man must know how to choose the right mean and avoid the extremes on either side, as far as possible." Confucius stressed moderation in everyday living, learning, loyalty,

truthfulness, and especially ethics (Hart, 1992).

Leisure time assists us to see the problem clearer; to extend our view further and to change our attitude and lives. It helps us to organize, manage, conduct, and lead. It is an anchor in our lives. It inspires our deeper thinking; it enriches our lives; it creates a new future for us. Leisure opens the door to the idea that there is always an easier, better and wiser way of leading and managing our lives.

Leisure and Creativity

It is well recognized that many new ideas emerge from leisure time when we are free, relaxed, happy and at peace, since our mind expands and reaches out. Often we are receptive to new ideas when uncluttered by the myriad of worries that often cloud our minds during daily life. How often do we have what seems to be an insurmountable problem, only to have a solution come to mind when relaxing, for example, listening to music or just sitting down with a coffee? We must be encouraged to not only enjoy our leisure but to also value our leisure for the benefits it brings. Leisure clearly has many advantages physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, culturally and spiritually.

Leisure can be applied for meaningful and purposeful activities, so we need to use our leisure time wisely, effectively and productively. "To be able to fill leisure intelligently is the last product of civilization, and at present very few people have reached this level." (Bertrand Russell) Leisure provides the opportunity to create the new direction and fresh advantages in our lives. Making change often creates new hope in life. Creating hope involves forming a dream for both one's short term and long term life's journey. As Walt Disney said, "If you can dream it, you can do it." In his case, the whole thing was started with a dream and a mouse.

Creativity is the greatest wealth in life. We need to learn to be creative to find creative solutions to improve or change our quality of lives. We need to think what no one else has ever thought, we need to imagine what no one else has ever imagined and we need to do what no one else has ever done. There are always many better, quicker, easier ways to solve problems, and we can use our leisure time creatively to think and discover more and better solutions in our lives. Creativity begins in our imagination and through curiosity and questioning, we learn from those around us, anything and anytime. Added to this is the need for precise observation, resulting in discoveries and inventions. To live a better life, it is not enough to hit the high points in just one or two areas. We must be balanced and developed in all areas of human endeavor. These include: life, health, knowledge, play, work, wisdom and bond with family, friends and the community.

Leisure and Hope

Leisure creates new hope, new possibility and new opportunity. We live through the different stages of our lives with various hopes and dreams. New hope

provides aspiration, imagination, inspiration and motivation in our lives. It helps us create and secure our personal and professional vision and mission of life. New hope helps us initiate the energy and vitality to keep us active, productive and positive. It may be said that where there is hope, there is life.

There are many types of hope, but it is important that one's hope is realistic and optimistic as well as measurable and attainable. Realistic and optimistic hope often creates a positive and constructive influence for our lives. New hope is like food, water, fresh air, sunshine and moonlight. It is not only essential, but it is the spirit and soul of our lives. Hope inspires great thinking and learning. Leisure creates hope. Hope creates vision. Vision transforms the world (Edginton & Chen, 2008). To be inspired, one needs to develop a strong sense of awareness and alertness. Inspiration is a habit that involves making good observations, connections and linkages between ideas and concepts. Through leisure activities we may discover a new hope every day. We all require mutual support, encouragement, inspiration and cooperation to create hope for a better individual life and for greater livability within our communities. It is through leisure that we are provided the means to enhance our lives building hope for the future.

Leisure and Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is the essence of a happy and healthy lifestyle; therefore, it is vital that we learn to be inspired by anyone, anything, anytime and anywhere in everyday life. Sometimes the best wisdom is expressed by the very young, making the adage "out of the mouth of babes" true. Inspiration is the key to our progress. One's inspiration provides a good reason for one's own success as well as to inspire others. Motivating others often requires meeting an individual's needs, especially so they will realize that they are valued as individual human beings. If we create an environment which enables individuals to achieve their aims, they will be inspired through their efforts to achieve their hopes and dreams. Many great artists, musicians, writers, thinkers, scientists and philosophers in both the East (e.g., Confucius) and West (e.g., Thomas Edison and Madame Curie) have viewed their vocation as a vacation; their work as their leisure.

How Leisure relates to Quality of Life?

The quality of life is to evaluate the general well-being of individuals and societies. The quality of life includes employment, wealth, environment, physical, mental health, education, recreation, leisure time and social belonging as a whole. The quality of life reflected well as what Socrates stated "what most count is not to live, but to live right (McClean, 1987).

Leisure develops the concept of well-being, which is the main core of life. Total well-being involves physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well being and to achieve that it is essential a holistic approach in life be taken. Effective

leisure encourages learning and developing confidence. It also helps us to take responsibility for our own health and well being. We need to be well aware of its implication for now and the future, so we may change our direction and implement a new vision and mission.

We should review and renew actively and positively through our leisure time. In the future we need to assist our students in how they may teach themselves about this skill. We must be aware of how to combine all relevant wisdom and be better informed about the diversity of how people think, learn, and act and enrich their lives. In life, creative thinking is the most important skill for problem solution, as thinking and doing are closely related in any action. The future will require people who are highly flexible, knowledgeable and skilful with adaptability and creativity and who have sufficient national and international understanding.

Leisure assists personal development in many ways. It needs, however, to be purposeful and enjoyable, and to be applicable in all life situations so as to meet personal challenges and growth. As there is always a better way to do it, it is essential we not only use our own wisdom but also learn from others to improve our effectiveness in learning to achieve the best possible result in the shortest possible time to improve our quality of lives.

Conclusion

Quality of life is both objective and subjective in its meaning and definition for each one of us, as we all have a different vision, mission, aspiration and inspiration in our lives. It is important that each of us is clear about the key elements or conditions that most affect our quality of life and makes the best effort to improve our own quality of life.

Quality of Life

It is not about the fame.

It is not about the wealth.

It is not about popularity.

It is not about the position.

It is about the health.

It is about the happiness.

It is about the relationship.

It is about the good mission.

Leisure time is an integral and an important part of our lives; it offers the opportunity to make changes, improves our creativity, helps us to discover new hope, inspires lifelong learning, encourages healthy lifestyles and improves the quality of life as a whole. Quality of life is not by chance, but is by choice, so we need to predict our future, prepare our future and create our future as we see fit. In

summary, leisure is an integral part of life; and leisure is the mother of our hope.

Leisure is an important part of our life and it is vital that we know how to use our leisure time effectively and positively to discover and create new direction and new destinations of life and to change and improve the quality of life, so that we live a good quality life. Leisure is the main source of creative thinking and creative philosophy; it gives us more freedom and space to think positively and creatively. Leisure assists us to discover new hope and new solutions to improve the quality of life. Therefore, leisure is an important and integral part of total education.

References

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