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Technology, Work and Leisure : Reflections on the Gains and Costs of Abundance

La technologie, le travail et le loisir : quelques réflexions sur les profits et les coûts de l'abondance

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Article abstract

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Technology, Work and Leisure : Reflections on the Gains and Costs of Abundance

Harold L. Wilensky

A technology that permits a heavy flow of military and consumer goods, a mass education system producing a mass audience, untrained to higher tastes, a cultural elite more heterogeneous in background and functions, more open to mass culture, these are all gains of abundance, but to what cost? The following text is drawn from an address presented at the last meeting of CIRRI and from the discussion which took place.

Introduction

The object of this paper is to present some reflections on the gains and costs of abundance — with special attention to the impact of industrialization (the increasing and widespread use of high-energy technology) on the quality of modern life.

I'm going to ignore a good many cultural differences between Canada and the United States — the lesser Canadian emphasis on equality, the Canadian realism contrasted to the American naive optimism and your blend of Anglo-Saxon soberness and French emotional intensity.

The gains and costs of abundance I speak of are common to all nations that have achieved a high level of technological development. I assume that everyone knows more about the benefits of being rich than about its costs. I will therefore concentrate on the burdens of abundance — burdens in the sense that they block process toward equality and freedom. The picture I'm going to paint is one of poverty — and most of what I will say about these burdens of abundance is unpleasant. So I shall begin with a view of the promise

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of modern life. It is not so much the affluence of our countries, their celebrated productivity, but what that productivity makes possible, and what they have in some measure already achieved.

If we assess North American life against its harsh initial development or against the pre-industrial societies of medieval Europe, then surely several things are true.

1. *We have more freedom. In the West, the mass of men are no longer slaves of tradition: they exercise freedom of choice in more spheres than ever before.* No longer do the inflexible rules of guild, clan, village-community, and monastery grip men in almost all of the daily round.
2. *Personal relationships, while less stable than before, give more play to individuality and self-expression.* We see this in our freer courtship, our less oppressive marriages, our more tolerant views of divorce and intermarriage, our more favourable views of equality between male and female, old and young — views which are now spreading from college-educated professionals (who incidentally have a very low divorce rate) to the rest of the population.
3. *There has been a proliferation of independent, self-governing organizations* — political parties, private enterprises, free unions, lodges, clubs, etc. This had make it possible for varied interests and values to be expressed, for varied groups to compete for the allegiance of the individual without destroying his liberties.
4. And finally, with the *spread of mass education and literacy*, millions who once stood on the sidelines of American life or remained in the backwaters of Canadian life now began to share the fruits of abundance. I speak chiefly of the two great minorities of this continent — the Negroes in the United States and French Canadians in Canada. Comparisons between these two people are often superficial but it is safe to say that what ever the signs of their liberation — from black nationalism in Harlem to the coming reception of General de Gaulle at « Expo » — they are now in a position to insist on some solid action to implement their individual and cultural rights. It is only small confort to compare a hundred lunchings with a

few dog bites, no schools with some schools. Nor is it much comfort to note that fifty years ago the French language was little used in this country beyond the confines of family, parish, political stump, and factory floor, while today it is winning begrudging recognition in salesroom and boardroom and is increasingly the medium of Canadian cultural accomplishment. Small comfort indeed, but such comparisons do suggest a long-run trend toward equality and social justice.

The wider diffusion of freedom, more chance for self-expression in personal relationships, pluralism in organizational life and culture, more educational opportunity, perhaps even more civil order — in the long view these are clear accompaniments of abundance in the Free West. But these positive achievements have their cost, and it is by no means certain that we can count on continued growth in freedom and equality as an automatic by-product of continued economic growth. For abundance brings its burdens as well as its blessings.

The Burden of Indifference to Relative Poverty at Home and Abroad

With economic advance, the remaining poor, the disorganized lower fifth within rich countries, tend to be ignored. And, of course, as Gunnar Myrdal and other students of international life indicate, the lower four-fifths of mankind tend to be ignored by the rich countries — so that the Marxian dictum that the rich get richer and poor, poorer, now applies to the globe as it never applied to any one country.

Despite all our talk of the war on poverty in the United States and Canada alike, the action is very limited. The indifference of the middle majority to the poor, and indeed their resistance to further process toward equality of any kind is plain. It is determined in part by two tendencies : 1) The increasingly uneven distribution of work common to all modern economies ; 2) The tendency of great powers to adopt bloated defense budgets, not only to maintain the balance of nuclear terror but also to fight so-called « small wars », a combination new to our time, one that also generates a demand for overtime work and job mobility. Both of these tendencies increase the natural indifference of hard-working, adaptable majorities to the fate of those who can neither work nor adapt.

Poverty, the Uneven Distribution of Work, and the New Leisure. The most striking thing about work in modern society is that it is unevenly distributed. When people hear that I'm studying leisure styles they often say, « Oh, yes. Isn't it awful. What will we do with all this leisure time? » And then they are apt to mention the electricians in New York City who struck for and won a 25-hour week. Or they'll mention « suburban Neuroses » — the ills of women with time on their hands.

Well, scratch the surface a bit and you'll find that those electricians are actually on the job 45 or 50 hours a week (logging overtime) ; and those women, like women everywhere, are putting in as long a « work » week as their ancestors of pre-industrial times — logging time in child-bearing, housekeeping, and the like.

Talk of the leisure-oriented society and the decline of the « Protestant Ethic » has obscured the basic fact of the matter : *modern populations on the average remain busy — with some groups becoming busier while other groups are condemned to forced leisure.*

*The average man's gain in leisure has been exaggerated by selective comparison of gross daily or weekly averages in working hours with those of the « take off » period of rapid economic growth in England, France, and America — a time of bloodcurdling schedules and conditions. Estimates of annual and lifetime leisure and comparisons with earlier times suggest a different picture. The skilled urban worker has now achieved the position of his thirteenth century counterpart, whose long work day, seasonally varied, was offset by many holidays, rest periods, and long vacations ; annual hours of work now, as then, remain in the range 1,900 - 2,500.*¹

Upper strata have in fact lost out. Even though their worklives are shorter and vacations longer than those of lower strata, these men work many hours, week after week — sometimes reaching a truly startling lifetime total. Top leaders in political and economic life, in the military establishment, education, welfare, aesthetics, and entertainment show a marked preference for income over leisure. I'll come back

(1) H.L. WILENSKY, « The Uneven Distribution of Leisure : The Impact of Economic Growth on 'Free Time' », *Social Problems*, 9 (Summer, 1961), pp. 32-56, Bobbs-Merrill Reprint, S-542, Bobbs-Merrill Reprint Series in the Social Sciences, The College Division, the Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 4300 West 62nd Street, Indianapolis 6, Indiana.

to the overworked leaders of modern society later when we get to the shortage of executive talent to man the welfare state.

How about women — who, after all, have the most apparent *choice* in the matter ? Economic growth everywhere brings more women into the monagricultural labour force. This, of course, excludes the « work » of home and family. It seems plain that emancipation, while it has released women for the labour market, has not to any equal extent released them from housewifery. Studies of the weekly round of women report a range of averages of 50 to 80 hours a week in housework, child-care, and paid labour. If a woman takes a job today, she has to figure on adding her workweek to a 40- or 50-hour « home-making » minimum, unless she can afford and obtain a maid.

On balance, the female « workweek » may be as long as it was a century ago; while pace-setting elites, the main carriers of cultural traditions and values, have likely increased their time at work. The uneven distribution of work among those working and the incidence of *involuntary retirement* and *unemployment* suggest that men who have gained most leisure need and want more work. The « leisure stricken » are not replacing the « poverty stricken » ; the two are becoming one.

In short, I disagree with those social critics who hold that modern society is leisure-oriented ; that leisure must now take up the slack caused by the disruption of the labour market in the new era of « cybernation » or by the new alienation of modern work ; that we will have to break the once tight relationship between income and employment or rewards and type of work ; that the typical man once had a stable career, but now, with greatly accelerated technological change, he does not or will not. If the arguments of the students of the « triple revolution » ² merely imply that, for economic and humanitarian reasons, there should be a floor of income below which no family should be allowed to fall, I enthusiastically agree. If they imply that we are becoming a leisure-oriented society, quickly moving toward the day when the average citizen has no useful work to do, and we therefore must find substitutes for work, I doubt it. We need to bend our abundance to great purposes, pay people for work that needs doing — create jobs, part-time and full, that will harness the energies and

(2) The Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution, « The Triple Revolution » (Santa Barbara, California, P.O. Box 4068, 1964). D.N. Michael, *Cybernation : The Silent Conquest* (Santa Barbara : Fund for the Republic, 1962).

channel the realism and enthusiasm of millions of men, women, and young people. Even for the long run of twenty years, it still makes sense to talk about education, vocational training, and public policy as they relate to jobs, labour markets, and careers.

One reason for the indifference of the rich countries to their wars on poverty is that they have sometimes devoted their resources to much larger wars — for instance the French involvement in Algeria and Indo-China and the utopian venture of the United States in Vietnam. The generalization is this; perhaps modern societies tend toward increasing civility, a more peaceful life at home, while they move toward an increased scale and diversity of violence, become more bellicose in their foreign relations. This brings me to the second burden of great riches.

The Burden of the Garrison State

Taking the United States as a prototype of the rich and powerful nation, we can see that its current annual rate of expenditures for the Vietnam war is about ten to twenty times the figure for the poverty war: for its civilizing domestic war, about \$2 billion; for its devastating foreign war, about \$19.3 billion.³

One other figure is necessary to put the administration's budget in perspective. Despite heroic economy drives in the defence establishment, for which we should applaud Secretary McNamara, despite renewed concern with the quality of American domestic life, the defence budget in 1964 remained about 56 per cent of the total federal budget. With Vietnam, the defence budget has now reached an annual rate of well over **\$60 billion**.

(3) Data from Ida C. Merriam, « Social Welfare Expenditures, 1964-65 » *Social Security Bulletin* (October, 1965), pp. 3-16; and William Bowen, « The Vietnam War: A Cost Accounting », *Fortune*, 73 (April, 1966), pp. 199 ff. The estimate represents Bowen's calculation of the cost in fiscal 1967 assuming that U.S. forces in South Vietnam would increase to 250,000 men by June 30, 1966 (apparently an underestimate), expand steadily to reach 400,000 by December 31, 1966 and then remain at that level. It includes military aid to South Vietnam forces, a portion of the cost of bases built in neighbouring Southeast Asian countries, and the support of Korean forces in Vietnam. With repeated escalations, the annual rate of expenditures is now much higher.

THE BALANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC CIVILIAN AND PUBLIC MILITARY

There is a problem of conflicting purposes here. Kenneth Galbraith has argued that a society preoccupied with the private production and aggressive sale of consumer goods, however magnificent, is a society that starves its public sector. Yet the problem is not merely one of « balance » between public and private effort; the fraction of the American gross national product spent by government at all levels for all purposes is, in fact well over one-fourth — by Western standards quite large. The problem is instead what we emphasize in our public sector, with what effect on the security, freedom, and equality of our people:

« How much for improving the technology of missiles ? How much for improving techniques of teaching, community organization, and welfare administration ? How much for the further training of scientists and engineers ? How much for the staffing of employment services, libraries, schools, colleges and art galleries ? How much for reaching the moon ? How much for reaching the unreached poor ? »

In short, the balance between public and private may be less fateful than the balance between public civilian and public military. So long as the United States pursues its national interests as a world power by accenting military action we will lag in the most civilizing of our public expenditures.

But are we not now becoming so rich that we can simultaneously escalate the war in Vietnam and the struggle to cope with our social problems at home ? If President Johnson believes that, he is deceiving himself. He really has two broad choices: With each new bombing campaign, each new commitment of troops, he can demonstrate that America is very rich and very powerful, which nobody anywhere doubts, while he abandons the struggle for a more humane social order. Or he can begin to disengage in Vietnam, and give some substance to the Great Society.

The case for disengagement is strong, whatever it might do for the Great Society or for world peace, but two points hereby deserve special attention. First, the talent to man the welfare state is very scarce. It is no news that there is a shortage of manpower in health, education, and welfare. Men in Washington assigned to worry about Vietnam are men not assigned to more civilizing tasks. The range of attention of even the most active and talented men — in the White

House, in Congress, in our Departments of HEW, Labor, Interior, Agriculture — is limited. One reason for this I've already discussed — the great demand for their services and the fact that they don't mind being overworked. And second, at the American level of abundance, a foreign policy accenting military action is expensive enough and inflationary enough to make the argument « cut the domestic frills, balance the budget » seductive. But it is not so expensive as to put us in the mood for « equality of sacrifice », as it did in World War II. The obvious casuality in progress toward a more humane welfare state.

I doubt that this is a problem unique to the United States. I suspect that the military establishment of every rich and powerful nation tends to grow at a faster rate than do the agencies devoted to equality and social justice. If any country is very, very affluent and at the same time is unfortunate enough to choose leaders whose judgment fails, it is likely to become reckless and profligate with its power and money. I note, for instance, that the cost of killing one enemy soldier in Vietnam is established at \$400,000 (a sum that buys among other things 75 bombs and 150 artillery shells for each corpse). Only the rich can afford such a monstrous waste of resources.

Let us now shift gears and consider the more pleasant costs of abundance. In addition to the burden of indifference to poverty, partly a product of the burden of arms, there is —

The Burden of Mass Entertainment and Promotion

The reluctance to face the problems of the public life is partly due to the enormous machinery of promotion devoted to the private life and the goods and services that fill it. Today in the United States the outlays for advertising and public relations are almost equal to the current expenditures on public schools (elementary and secondary) — each is about \$18 billion annually. ⁴ *The more abundance, the more*

(4) In 1957-58 current expenditures in public schools were \$11.7 billion; total advertising expenditures for all media were \$10.3 billion, Fritz Machlup, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962, pp. 104, 275. Business executive Harold S. Geneen estimates that the 1965 expenditure by business on advertising was \$15.5 billion, with another \$2 billion spent of PR. *San Francisco Chronicle*, « Weak Spots in Communication », May 13, 1966. The total outlay for 1964-65 elementary and secondary day schools was \$18.6 billion. *Fall 1964 Statistics of Public Elementary and Secondary Day Schools*, U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, January, 1965.

activity to increase the desire for it. This is reflected in the way we spend our leisure time. The sheer arithmetic of media exposure (press, radio, film, television) is striking. Nine in ten American homes average five to six hours — over a third of each waking day — with the TV set on — and it is not just turned on; it is usually being watched. Additional time goes to reading newspapers and magazines.

The trend is up. An increasing fraction of the daily routine is devoted to the products of these mass media. Mainly due to the rise of TV, the media together and on the average now take up almost as much time as work; substantial minorities log more hours a year on TV viewing alone than working.

So far we are on safe ground. The *size* of this frenzied promotion effort and the astonishing amount of exposure are well known. Even with the aid of the shrewd epigrams of Marshall McLuhan, however, the impact of the media on the quality of life in North America is unknown — or, at least, is very difficult to judge.

Since little is known about it, I can now sing out with my prejudices. I'd like to suggest two propositions which I think true and which deserve further study: 1) The media and their associated promotional activities *permeate experience*; 2) the *media tend to be apolitical*, accenting the value of private consumption, or, *when political, they are sensational* reflecting not the real world but the world of *crisis journalism* — at home, the world of welfare scandals, alleged student riots; abroad, a fictional portrait of the Good Guys against the Bad.

1. *The mass media are like medieval villages: they form an all-embracing background*

In addition to actual exposure, the media today represent the *core of our conversation*; talk about the products advertised, the shows seen, the latest action in « Batman » and « Bonanza », the latest interviews on « Sunday » or « Aujourd'hui » — media talk is a prominent feature of the total flow of speech. It is likely that with the rise of TV a decreasing share of time is available for other forms of existence, including reading, ordinary conversation, and private contemplation.

A recent nationwide survey of TV viewers, sponsored by CBS, written by Professor G. Steiner, emphasizes the *position* side of this. It shows that for most Americans *TV has become an integral part of nightly family relaxation* and that it *tends to keep the family home together*. However, the same survey also shows that the *relaxation resembles addiction*. The breakdown of the TV set, for instance, has become the « New American Tragedy »; two in three families replace or repair the set within three days, only eight per cent wait as long as three weeks.

Feelings about the TV habit resemble *not* feelings about movies, magazines, or music, but feelings about too many martinis, cigarettes, and charge accounts. The underlying themes are guilt and ambivalence: TV makes a good « educational baby-sitter », but it's too bad there's so much violence. « It's a good escape for me, it keeps the kids out of trouble », *but* it's a colossal waste of time. We all ought to be doing something else — talking, reading, playing, sleeping.

Finally, the togetherness turns out to be no more than physical; most viewers « accommodate to a reduced level of communication ». This CBS survey could not pin down with certainty what an evening with TV costs in *not* doing something else because so few families stay without a set long enough to establish alternative habits, but the answers to the question, « What did you do (the last time the set broke down) during the time you would ordinarily have spent watching TV? » are suggestive. One replied: « We got acquainted with each other all over again ». And there was this desperate statement, « It was terrible. We did nothing — my husband and I talked ».

2. *This brings me to my second point about the burden of mass entertainment*

What is being talked about? Basically, what is seen, heard, and read is shaped by the promotional aims of the media — the desire to create wants in the private sector. A sustained daily din whets our appetite for cars. Who whets the appetite for rapid transit — at least outside Montreal? For the preservation of our natural resources? More adequate hospitals? There's a big campaign to « put a tiger in your tank, » and only a small campaign to put more teachers in the schools.

This preoccupation with sales promotion gives the broadcast media a bland, often fuzzy tone. For instance the necessity of not offending anyone, of emphasizing what everyone can accept makes the typical television program conventional and apolitical. I realize that there are national differences here — that the CBC is perhaps not so cautious as the CBS and other private networks of the United States. The TV hero up here is as likely to be the big city coroner « Wojeck » confronting the problems of urban life, as the Western ranch owner, rural and self-reliant, in « Bonanza ». I am aware, too, that « This Hour Has Seven Days » and « Le Sel de la Semaine » and the like have demonstrated that hardhitting public affairs programs can win large audiences, and raise the level of political dialogue. Unfortunately, I gather that top men in broadcasting circles have recently been backing away from this type of offering. Perhaps they feel that American styles of programming are safer. If so, I hope that they will not end up featuring the most popular TV shows of recent years in the United States — Westerns. The heroes are frontiersmen — anarchic, unconstrained. An impatient, simple-minded irresponsibility permeates the performance of these characters — and may be it is not too much to suppose that the Good Guys-Bad Guys mentality they encourage spills over into domestic and international politics. Barry Goldwater's ride across the political scene in 1964, like Ronald Reagan's in 1966, had the earmarks of the « adult » Western — whose hero is also above politics, and who also promises to clean up the mess with one quick draw.

Finally — and I'm being purely speculative now — it is possible that the revival of World War II movies on the late-late show, the glorification of the joys of hand-to-hand combat on the prime-time shows, condition us for the daily dose of realolife slaughter — our sensibilities so atrophied that all we see on the six o'clock news is just another Bad Guy biting the dust.

I would guess that such elusive effects cover the spectrum of our values. It is this that leads media critics to use such words as « trivialize » and « vulgarize » in describing the impact on values, and, in general, to label press, radio, and TV « the mass media of distraction. »

Conclusion

What I am saying in essence is this: *our very successes bring with them new threats to equality and social justice.* Our abundance is

astonishing. It leaves a pool of unneeded, unwanted manpower behind it. The average amount of leisure is impressive but it is unevenly distributed and most of it is forced; those who have it — the unemployed, the aged, the least skilled — lack the education and resources for its creative use, and would prefer to be working anyway. Our military power is impressive. It brings vague unease. The more we seem to win the arms race, the more insecure we become. The more we substitute military power for sensible foreign policy, the more impotent we feel.

The slow spread of the middle class consumer package, of mass culture and mass education is no mean achievement when we think of the poverty and illiteracy that preceeded it. More people now participate in the common life. But going all-out for the goodies, immersing ourselves in the happier products of mass entertainment, makes us indifferent to the remaining poor and more resentful of the cost of doing the public's business. The mass media reinforce our preoccupation with the goodies, including spectacular military hardware, and they divert our attention from all social problems.

The rise of mass culture may also threaten the standards of the most educated and end in an all-embracing mass culture of mediocre quality. I have made only passing reference to this. Let me elaborate the point for a minute. The problem is not that with rising riches the taste of the masses has been debased — the move from watching bear baiting and cock fighting in 1850 to watching situation comedies and stock car races today may be an improvement. The problem is, rather, that men with the opportunity and education to develop their sensibilities are becoming full participants in mass culture. They spend a reduced fraction of time in exposure to quality print and film. Among the bits of evidence: a survey of a cross-section of adults in the United States found that those who had not finished elementary school averaged 4.3 hours a day viewing television, while those more privileged men and women who had completed more than four years of college — typically the holders of Masters' and Doctors' degrees or professional school degrees — watched an average of 3.0 hours a day. Generally, as we look at the core of leisure — television — and ask about tastes and preferences, the difference between the most educated and the least turn out to be small.

Do these conclusions apply outside the United States? Is American culture prelude to a universal industrial culture? Or do national dif-

ferences in public policy regarding poverty, war, education, and the mass media crucially determine the quality of national life? If we ignore direct exports like Coca Cola, Westerns, and supermarkets, much of the alleged « Americanization » of the world is a matter of parallel cultural and political developments linked to the level of technological development. European critics may find comfort in thinking of the costs of abundance as imports from a materialistic, bellicose America — that our indifference to poverty, our reckless use of military power, our excess of mass entertainment and promotion are all « made in the U.S.A. » But that will not change the roots of the problem: a technology that permits such a heavy flow of military and consumer goods that extravagant waste seems tolerable; a mass education system producing a mass audience, untrained to higher tastes; a cultural elite more heterogeneous in background and functions, more open to mass culture.

MR. WAISGLASS (Government of Canada)

No country in the world has such a high level per capita of university graduates and high school graduates as the United States. Where then, or how does one account now for the failure and bankruptcy in leadership which you have indicated so well and, I think, so clearly?

Your talk apparently suggests that universities themselves have failed, and perhaps they have become corrupted by the materialistic society, the political leaders, the business leaders, the leaders of industry, the leaders in commerce, and generally graduates of American universities. Where does a society like that of the United States look for leadership to lead them into the Promised Land if it is not to the leaders of the universities?

PROFESSOR WILENSKY

It is a very good question and central to an understanding of the main drift of modern society.

A modern university education increases opportunity on the economic side; the university sees to it that the manpower modern industry needs is supplied. Does it raise the level of political judgment? I do not think so; I disagree with many people who do think so. If it raises

the level of political judgment, alerts the citizenry to public issues, and the rest, it does so only very slowly at a time when we need it desperately fast.

I think that the problem is partly the diversity of education. You ask where are all those educated people, and I say in reply, « They came from different kinds of educational institutions; what do you expect? » Half of college-aged youth in California are in college; half of all the eighteen to twenty-two years old are actually in college, and that fraction is increasing.

There colleges are arranged in a three tier system. The bottom tier is no better than a good high school used to be. It is the junior college. The second tier is perhaps no better than the poorest of the four years colleges used to be. There is variation here, too; some of the state colleges are being upgrated a great deal. But the average level for the United States as a whole is low. At the top, in California, there are nine campuses, like U.C.L.A. and Berkeley. There are a few excellent universities in California, as in the rest of the country, but they carry only a tiny fraction of that half of the college-aged youth in college.

In the development of a diversified education system the average rise in the level of education does not mean very much for culture and television viewing. The educated use television in much the same way as the less educated, on average. Nor will it mean much for an independent, critical, informed opinion on matters like Vietnam. I think there is a slow move in an upward direction, but it is not spectacular, and the slowness is rooted in the diversity of education.

You also mentioned our isolation; I am not for a return to our isolation. I am simply for constraint in the use of power. American presence here, there and everywhere — I would rather see it here and there, and cut down on the everywhere. The self-appointed role of world policeman does not appeal to me because it is futile, it is ineffective; we stand there astride southeast Asia with our bombs in the one hand and our artillery shells in the other, and we cannot even move goods in the port without having a twenty or thirty per cent pilferage rate, if you will.

Everyone knows about the Port of New York, and how a man with a truck filled with beer barrel can in collusion with just one man, the

fellow who unloads the thing, put one of those barrels in his car, and what on earth do we think is happening in Saigon? We supply the Viet Cong when they can't supply themselves. The whole thing is utopian ineffectiveness. That senseless destruction is also evil is another matter. It is the ineffectiveness that I speak of.

To return to the general argument, the political judgments and cultural tastes of college graduates are diversified because their educational experiences are diversified. Another way to put the point: education does not inoculate one against totalitarianism. In Nazi Germany some of the first recruits to the Nazi movement were teachers, many hundreds of thousands of them. Some of the people put in charge of the genocide movement there were Ph.D.'s, lawyers, and professional administrators. I am not sure that in the modern world we have evidence that educational level alone will do much for us in the quality of civilization, or for constraint in political action.

MR. WAISGLASS

Well I think, if I may quarrel with that, it is not education. It is the way in which education has been corrupted in the United States — the lost sense of purpose of education, and not educating people. Even universities are training people for jobs. I think this has been a corrupting influence, and what I am looking for in your answer is how do you break out of this vicious circle? Where can we look for a new leadership in the elevation of education in the United States if it is not supplied from the products of the past generation?

PROFESSOR WILENSKY

It is an extremely difficult question. I do not think you can run a modern economy without technical training institutes, without engineering schools, without Ph.D. programs in chemistry, the physical sciences, the biological sciences, and the social sciences. I do not think you can run a modern economy without this diversified educational establishment and, indeed, most countries have not yet come to face the amount of investment in education that they must have if they are to continue to grow economically and man the apparatus they have.

Part of that diversified education system has to be devoted to more humane purposes. I speak of the manning of the welfare state, of health, education and welfare, of more investment in the teachers you are talking about as being « corrupted ». To maintain a high quality of general liberal arts education requires far more investment in education. Also, there is a need for a type of control of admissions among those educational institutes in a position to control admissions.

One of the great errors that I think we made at Berkeley was that we moved to 27,500. If we had stopped at 20,000 we would have been doing a better job. Berkeley, incidentally, has a rather impoverished student-faculty ratio compared to Harvard, or even Michigan, another state-supported institution. That, too, is a matter of the money you spend.

MR. CHARTIER (Hydro-Quebec)

I suppose we are all agreed that we are living in a society where we are more and more orientated towards leisure, and yet what I find in my own work is that the values that govern society, the people that are working in it, are work orientated.

We are still defined by what we do professionally, and the moment we stop doing it we are nothing. Is there a way whereby this fact of increase leisure time can be paralleled by an increased evaluation of the worth of leisure, so that we do not have this awful problem as we increase in age where we wonder what we are going to become when we stop being defined by the values of work, and stop working professionally? There is a tremendous gap in my knowledge and my experience; I wonder, and I am asking you now, how can we fill the gap and administer it to a point, provided we think it desirable?

PROFESSOR WILENSKY

I think that you have to be specific about what population you are talking about when you say leisure oriented — involving a population with time on its hands and not prepared for leisure.

Let us take the television audience and one modest finding from my own study of the uses of television. I will not burden you with

actual details, but there is a very large segment of the Detroit Metropolitan area in the 1960 interviews I carried on with 1,354 men that were hooked, if you will, on the detective, western, adventure trio. I am starting with the core of leisure; we will get to other things in a minute.

The core of leisure is that they watch three or four hours a day, and they watch detective, western, adventure action shows. I would ask them, « When you are watching television, do you ever feel that you'd rather be doing something else but you just can't tear yourself away? » « Yes ». « How often do you feel that way? — once or twice a day, once or twice a week, once or twice a month, or less often? » « Every hour, » they would say, and a very large fraction, I have forgotten the figure now, would say once or twice a day. Then I would say, « Do you ever feel that you have time on your hands, and you just don't know what to do with yourself? » And they answer, « Yes. » « How often would you feel that? » And so on; Butting all that together you get this picture of the people watching western, detective, adventure shows in large doses. They are compulsive viewers; they feel they would like to tear themselves away from the screen, but they just cannot do it. They let the shows shade into one another, too bored to flick the dial. They are compulsive absorbers of gargantuan amounts of shoddy television. This goes to your question about the leisure oriented population. Are there people leisure oriented, work oriented, or what?

On the other hand, if you ask who are the sports fans watching television, going to the games, and all that, these fellows — by no stretch of the imagination could you call them unhealthy, even if you are hostile to sportsfanship — are mastering the details of the game. They do it with zest and enthusiasm; they are not hooked to the television screen. (« I feel that I wish I could turn the thing off but I can't »). They do not report that. They are sports fans, and they absorb a lot of it, but nobody could harshly judge it from their point of view. They are having fun. Also, from any objective point of view it is a kind of competence they are mastering. They know the batting averages, the ball scores, and biographies and records of the players, and everything else. They sometimes play ball with their kids, too.

So, what I am saying is you have to be very specific as you look at this burden of leisure, or as you look at « time on your hands. »

Again the people who have lots of it and find it a burden are the prematurely retired, the women heading broken homes, other women whose children have grown up and they have nothing to do, and they wish they did.

If only we could have a four-hour a day job, or a three-hour a day job, to organize our economy in ways to accommodate these aging people who are not really aging; the sixty year old pilot who has been through so many thunderstorms that he is a safer man; he has had to make so many decisions on the point of no return that he is a much more responsible man than the youngster coming on the flight line. I feel safer with that sixty year old.

For pilots, we have inched that up, that retirement age, and I think we should do that in a lot of occupations. I also think we should find part-time jobs for a lot of women whose kids have grown up, for a lot of old folks who are not so old, given a ninety year life expectancy figure.

This is a problem for public policy, and this is the way to tackle the massive doses of « time on our hands »; to single out those populations, and reduce unemployment, do something about manpower problems, retrain, upgrade, move people out of hopeless areas into areas of more opportunity, with moving allowances, as the Swedes do. Organize your employment services so that the product of the high school can get in touch more realistically with the labour market. We need public policies to deal with this problem of time on our hands — not so much a policy for leisure, although we need that, too, but, more crucially, a policy for distributing useful work to those who need and want it.

MR. CHARTIER

How do you sell leisure values to people close to retirement who are defined by values centred strictly on work? How do you tell them, « It is wonderful, now what you are going to be undoing because you are leaving something that you are doing? »

PROFESSOR WILENSKY

Well, if you accept the validity of the public policies that I have just suggested, do not retire people fully — let them have some tie to

the work. Then their leisure will be more fruitful. That is an inference I draw from the following data. People on short, very short work weeks at least have some sense that they are tied to the community. People who are unemployed and have no job at all and want to work are relatively isolated. Their leisure is more privatized — that is, they watch television alone, and often say they prefer to, although frequently they do not. They eat alone often. It is that heavy burden of privatized leisure.

I do not speak of privacy, the comfort of private contemplation, the joy of it. I am talking about people who are isolated and are not tied to anything, and are disturbed by it. They end up in mental hospitals many times, and that is because they have been cut sharply out of the labour market. They have no tie to the main stream of community life because it is work centred and it will remain work centred.

That is my point. To be at work in modern society is to be alive. It is unfortunate, but that is so, and until somebody can show me a modern economy where people are really cutting out from work and not working overtime when they have the choice, not moonlighting when they have the choice, not having double-earning families when they can — and that is all going up you know, the double-earning families.

If you show me a modern economy where work is not central, then I will give you a different kind of answer to your question, but so long as we have this work centred economy, I will accept the world as it is constituted. The problem of leisure is often merely the simple absence of an opportunity to work: women who have been behind four walls with their children in a kind of prison, and now with the children gone, do not know what to do with themselves. Give them a chance at work. Those prematurely retired fifty-five or sixty years old — let them have a little work; make the transition to retirement slower. And then their leisure will be more active, if you like it active; more group centred, if you like it group centred; and I think more useful for their own mental health and for the community as a whole.

MR. WAISGLASS

May I suggest in answer to that portion of your statement, that it is not work that people need; but a function in life, and this is a

problem for the juveniles as well, and for a lot of people in our society who have tasks to perform, which is quite different to having a function in life.

PROFESSOR WILENSKY

Whether we call it work or not, I see a great diversity of jobs to be done; we can create these jobs. In California there are services that simply are not done, and they create a lot of trouble. Old people could do them; young people could do them. People who are now at either end of the scale are to some extent being squeezed out of the labour market. Gardening is one; you cannot get a gardener. We could organize that labour market by government subsidies to small entrepreneurs who would train and supply gardeners promptly instead of six months after people call. Another, perhaps better example is domestic service which now accounts for three per cent of the labour market. Women heading broken homes are now the core of that market. We could do a great deal with public policies aimed at upgrading, dignifying and improving the efficiency of domestic service. Right now it is demeaning; the relationship between master and servant is unpleasant. Most housewives who have servants are having trouble; they are hard to get and harder to relate to. I do not know if this is true in Montreal.

You could for example — and already it has been done to some extent — have people running small businesses who will supply two men. They come sweeping into the house in the morning, full of equipment, very modern and efficient. By noon they have got the whole place cleaned out, and that is the model of the future, and I do not mean they have taken your furniture, they are bonded, they are trained. There is no reason why we cannot do that for people who are marginal to the economy. This will be costly, but the richer you get the more you can afford this. I know your question was how do we give them meaningful work. I think any work that needs doing is meaningful if you handle it right, organize it, upgrade it, make it dignified. The public service jobs that old people can do in politics, in welfare, in the schools are very numerous, too.

You want a more romantic answer that, but let me give you an illustration of an old person who has been squeezed out of the labour market but who may find the simplest of public service jobs at

\$1.98 an hour dignified. In the 1960 interviews we carried on of a hundred and five white underdogs, that is people on relief in the Detroit area who had also been unemployed for a year or more, we asked, « What is the best job you ever held? » Now, the Detroit area had a tough welfare department, and they had a work relief program. Many states in the United States do not have work relief programs; they do not make the relief recipients work. They did in Detroit because they had a shortage of cash. Many of these people suggested that the best job they ever had was the one they now did in the relief program. Why? What were they doing? They were tending furnace and helping janitors in the schools. They were helping teachers erase blackboards, and it was meaningful to them. We do not need something that is so extraordinarily romantic. Anything that seems useful will make these people feel better than if they are completely squeezed out of the labour market, and these work relief projects are one answer for people of limited skills. Does that get at all to your question?

MR. WAISGLASS

There are social functions as well as economic functions.

PROFESSOR WILENSKY

Yes, I see. But education is a social function. These people were helping to man the schools.

MR. CHARTIER

This is really not what I meant. You need to give them a function that is meaningful, useful, and purposeful in social relationships. It is not just a question of economic functions.

PROFESSOR WILENSKY

I believe that you mistake my personal point of view because I have dwelt on the economic side of this. The Peace Corps is work, for instance, but it is a symbol of American life at its best — and it is purposeful in social relationships and functions. Here, it was Kennedy's

— and I do not buy the Kennedy myth that he was all that great a man — but he had the shrewd insight that there was a pool of idealism and good will among teenagers and young adults, and this good will could be tapped by setting up programs like the Peace Corps, or a Neighbourhood Youth Corps on the domestic front. These ideas were born in Kennedy's administration. And the Administration would suddenly find itself with a surplus of applicants. Right now, even with all of America's foreign troubles, and the CIA scandals, there is still a surplus of applicants for the Peace Corps.

This is a marvelous example of what I think you and I can agree on, that is that there is a pool of idealism and good-will where the public service motives of young people can be tapped. We need to make work. We need to create programs, adopt missions and purposes that are appropriate to that pool of idealism. The Peace Corps is only one example. We must think of similar programs for other populations — the aged; women — for whom meaningful leisure is superficially the problem, which would be largely solved by providing meaningful work.

DEAN WOODS

Well, this has been an exciting and wide ranging discussion, and we are greatly indebted to the imagination of the sociologists who have linked together these problems in the world in which we live, and I think everybody here would like me to thank you very much for a most stimulating beginning to our Conference.

LA TECHNOLOGIE, LE TRAVAIL ET LE LOISIR : QUELQUES RÉFLEXIONS SUR LES PROFITS ET LES COÛTS DE L'ABONDANCE

L'objectif principal de ce travail est de réfléchir quelque peu aux profits et aux coûts de l'abondance tout en insistant d'une façon toute spéciale sur l'influence de l'industrialisation dans notre vie moderne.

Si nous comparons notre époque au moyen âge, nous constatons plus de liberté, plus de relations inter-personnelles quoique moins stables qu'auparavant, une proli-

fération d'organisations indépendantes, etc. Cependant, malgré toute l'abondance de l'économie nord-américaine, on note de plus en plus une certaine indifférence face à la pauvreté et en plus une distribution très inégale du travail. Dire que notre société est orientée de plus en plus vers le loisir serait une absurdité : Les peuples modernes demeurent assez affairés en moyenne. Cependant, plusieurs groupes sont condamnés par le manque de travail à rechercher le loisir.

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