

# INDUSTRIAL TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL POLICY IN OKLAHOMA

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**An attempt is made to distinguish free time, idleness, recreation, and leisure. It is postulated that government should seek to meet *all* the different types of needs for recreation *and* leisure, etc. Establishing a continuum of types of policies ranging from Industrial Tourism, which maximizes financial return per dollar expended, suggested three ways to evaluate the position of a state's recreational policy on that continuum. The findings indicate that Oklahoma's recreational policy is heavily oriented toward Industrial Tourism.**

People have always had some free time, but in recent years much more such time has come suddenly. Yet even though free time is becoming more abundant, many people and their governments remain somewhat insensitive to it, tending to view its use as a problem to be dealt with some other time and/or not a "serious" concern of academia, business, or government.

Those who are sensitive to increased free time and are paying attention to it have found we do not know much about it (1). There has been much confusion in our consideration of leisure and recreation. This confusion stems, in part, from our lack of adequate definitions of the terms. Without adequate definitions, especially generally accepted ones, we cannot study leisure and recreation. Also, without adequate definitions, people and government agencies will have problems in deciding the objectives and the role of leisure and recreation.

Since the nineteenth century, when social thinkers foresaw the importance of leisure or rather of *time made free* by the reduction of factory work (2), there has been a lack of agreement on the properties of "leisure" and therefore on its implications. Probably one of the reasons for this is that "leisure" came to be synonymous with "spare" or "free time", the opposite of work. Many Americans have confused leisure with idleness, even debauchery, and in a culture that was ingrained with the worship of work, leisure and recreation have never been considered quite respectable (3).

When leisure is viewed as time free from obligations of work, family, etc., recreation has commonly been defined as the use of leisure time (4). While leisure has commonly been considered *time* of a special kind, recreation has been considered an activity of a certain kind during leisure time (5). Often leisure and recreation are considered synonymous, as when Havighurst (6) listed eleven categories of leisure which are used by most sources as forms of recreation (7).

There are some problems in considering recreation to be the use of leisure time and also in defining leisure as free or spare time. The former is clear when one remembers that many American vacations, though high in recreation, are by no means leisurely or that after two weeks of recreation on vacations many need a few days of leisure to *recuperate from* their vacation. The latter problem, of equating free time with "leisure time," is evident when one considers the great fervor among people to fit so many activities in their "leisure time" that work (on the job) becomes the place to *rest* and have leisure.

Leisure, first of all, should be differentiated from time that is free from obligations. Free time is that period not occupied by provision for economic or biological subsistence. The use of free time is up to the (free) choice of the individual. This time can be used for leisure or it can be used for a number of other things.

Leisure is also not synonymous with recreation; it is not a "doing" but a "being".

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Leisure, though, is not idleness. As Josef Pieper (8) explains:

"Idleness is the source of many faults and among others, of that deep-seated lack of calm that makes leisure impossible. Leisure is only possible when a man is at one with himself, *when he acquiesces to his own being*. Leisure is a mental and spiritual attitude, not simply the result of external factors, not of spare time, holiday or vacation but an attitude of mind, a condition of the soul. (And) leisure is *not* the attitude of mind of those who actively intervene, but of those who are open to everything; of those who leave the reins loose and easy themselves . . . (or) *the letting of oneself go*.  
(emphasis added)

Leisure is "letting oneself go", while recreation is acting, of "doing". Recreation time is useful time, a period when people are to be made ready, through relaxation and rest (and activities), for work which is to follow (9). Recreation is a means to another end, whether status or making ready for future work, while leisure is an end in itself. For many who work during the day there is a narrowing, a focusing, a contraction and concentration of consciousness, while during leisure there is a widening, an unfocusing, and a broadening and expansion of consciousness (1). Recreation and leisure are different things, and the need for leisure is not necessarily satisfied by recreation.

### **POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT**

There is a vast range of policies a government can pursue in relation to the natural resources of the region governed and the use of these natural resources by and for the citizens. Policies can range from regarding natural resources as useful only for high *economic* well-being to view in their use as centered on high *social* well-being. Most government policies probably fall between these two extremes, forming a continuum. This statement is not enough, though; it is important to evaluate approximately *where* on the continuum a government falls so that the policy can be adjusted if it is not what is desired by government officials or by citizens. In order to evaluate this, it is necessary to look more closely at both extremes.

At one extreme in the area of recreation, leisure, and free time, emphasis is placed on the economic use of natural resources, which has been labeled "Industrial Tourism" (10, p. 176). Industrial tourism is a big business for public and private agencies. It arises out of the view of natural resources as mainly money-producing units.

Industrial Tourism is not a policy only of businessmen, but is adopted by those government agencies that would apply natural resources to satisfying the "unlimited recreation wants" of the "public." With some decoding, their "parks for people" public relations slogan really means that parks are for people-in-automobiles (10, p. 181) or for the "Industrial tourists" (who seek "to recreate" rather than leisure or a re-creation of the whole self). In providing for these supposed recreation wants government agencies have spent billions on projects and developed thousands of miles of "access" roads, often meanwhile increasing the erosion of the park quality. Those agencies point with pride to their past programs and facilities and anxiously envision bigger projects in the future.

On the other end of the continuum from Industrial Tourism is emphasis on social well-being. This is an emerging view in which the central interest is not activities or facilities or programs, but rather what happens to *people*. Emphasis here goes from policy of maximizing the dollar return per dollar expended to one of maximizing the number of persons served. Government policy does not then just emphasize meeting recreation needs for some of the people, but provides for all the people in *all* aspects of free time, both in needs for activities (for recreating, for play, and for tourism) and in needs for leisure and recreation of self.

### **METHODS**

In estimating where a state falls on a continuum between emphasis on financial return (Industrial Tourism) and emphasis on people, there are several possible ways to evaluate a state's recreational policy. Three ways now proposed involve examining major areas of policy decision-making (involving large amounts of capital and resources).

The first proposed criterion for evaluating state policy is the extent to which the state encourages and/or promotes resource engineering in the state by federal agencies (mainly the Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and Soil Conserv-

ation Service). While this area was not thoroughly explored here because of the complexity of this variable, it might prove very relevant for some states. Active promotion of the engineering and development in the state by federal agencies would indicate an effort at resource development with emphasis on monetary return.

The second basis of evaluation is the choice of type and location of recreation areas. There are many types or classifications (kinds) of areas, and different locations of areas, possible. The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission defines six classifications of outdoor recreation areas that are coming to be used by park planners and administrators. Class I are high-density areas, with many uses and generally located close to or within major centers of population. Class II are general outdoor recreation areas; Class III are natural environment areas with little development, Class IV are unique natural areas, Class V are very primitive areas, and Class VI are historic and cultural sites (11).

The positions oriented to Industrial Tourism would emphasize development of those areas with greatest return (financial return or return in satisfaction of "recreation wants"). To maximize return, areas of Class II, IV, and III would be developed because they are high in assets (scenic beauty, water and land resources, etc.). The positions on the opposite end of the continuum (social well-being) would emphasize greater use of resources by all people and also the satisfaction of recreation *and* leisure needs. In order to meet the needs for leisure, there would be less development of natural areas with greater emphasis on quality. And in order to meet greater recreation needs of *all* people simultaneously with leisure needs, there would be greater development of user or high-density areas *located near to the people*. The location of an area is one of the most, perhaps the most, important factor affecting attendance, for location affects travel, cost, and time (12). If the emphasis were upon service to people in contrast to monetary return, then recreation expenditures should be correlated with the population in a recreation district.

The last area of evaluation is the choice of types of facilities developed. A state may devote more expenditures to those types of facilities that provide greater tangible return (especially financially) such as lodges, resorts, and cabins, or alternatively to those that have greater use for outings, scenic drives, camping, etc. It is reasoned that the greater the state's expenditures per person using the facilities, the more it is concerned with equal weight per person, while the less this is, the more it is concerned with tangible return.

### FINDINGS

In the first area, promotion of development by federal agencies, there is a strong indication that Oklahoma is decisively oriented towards Industrial Tourism. The state of Oklahoma is among the highest in this nation (about second) in per capita federal expenditures (13). Second, the recreation attendance at Corps of Engineers lakes alone in Oklahoma is twice that at Oklahoma state parks (14). Finally, stated policy emphasis of the state has been and remains "heavily concerned with planning in order to get matching funds from the federal government" (15).

The second criterion is the choice of type and location of recreation areas. One indication of non-orientation towards equal weight per person is in the reports of the Department of Tourism and Recreation, which in its Five Year Plan scheduled all development in Class II (general outdoor) and Class III (natural environment) areas and none of the expenditures in Class I (high-density or user) areas. Moreover, to ascertain whether expenditures were consistent with use by the population, both population and expenditures have been classified into the eleven recreation districts used by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and in the Five Year Plan, and compared in those districts. We would expect a negative or a low correlation if the state's policy was towards the extreme of Industrial Tourism and a perfect, positive correlation between population and expenditures if it gave exactly equal weight to people and use. As shown by Table 1, the percentages of population and expenditures in the eleven recreation districts do not show a one-to-one positive (rank-order) correlation. Rather, the correlation came out for fiscal year ending 1973 to be  $-.073$ , for fiscal year ending 1974  $-.036$ , and for the proposed Five Year Plan,  $+.064$ .

In the third proposed area of evaluation (choice of the type of facilities), Tables

TABLE 1. *Distribution of population and expenditures in the eleven recreation districts.*

District	Population (%)	Expenditures FY 1973 (%)	Expenditures FY 1974 (%)	Expenditures (Proposed) 5 yr. plan (%)
1	6.47 (5) <sup>a</sup>	0.73 (3)	2.32 (3)	5.84 (4)
2	7.47 (8)	33.18 (11)	29.73 (11)	22.09 (11)
3	5.61 (3)	15.46 (9)	23.97 (10)	19.75 (10)
4	6.48 (6)	27.50 (10)	19.79 (9)	10.46 (9)
5	7.0 (7)	1.24 (5)	1.12 (1)	1.01 (1)
6	18.36 (10)	0.51 (2)	2.85 (5)	7.58 (7)
7	6.16 (4)	5.17 (7)	5.69 (7)	5.49 (3)
8	26.34 (11)	0.97 (4)	3.31 (6)	9.98 (8)
9	9.21 (9)	1.34 (6)	2.84 (4)	3.72 (2)
10	4.23 (2)	13.52 (8)	6.10 (8)	7.01 (5)
11	2.61 (1)	0.35 (1)	2.27 (2)	7.06 (6)

<sup>a</sup>Rank in parenthesis.

TABLE 2. *Comparison of expenditures per use between the lodges and other facilities in Oklahoma, for fiscal year ending 1973.*

	Use**	Expenditures	Expenditures/Use
Lodges	208,768	\$4,924,961	\$23.59
Parks, Recreation* Areas, Cultural and Historical	16,812,265	\$1,304,953	\$ .08

\*Includes all activities in these types of areas (even those producing money); not separated in state records.

\*\*According to state records.

TABLE 3. *Comparison of the expenditures per use between the lodges and other facilities in Oklahoma for fiscal year ending 1974.*

	Use**	Expenditures	Expenditures/Use
Lodges	295,362	\$4,131,212	\$13.99
Parks, Recreation* Areas, Cultural and Historical	14,902,696	\$5,140,472	\$ .35

\*Includes all activities in these areas (even those producing money); not separated in state records.

\*\*According to state records.

2 and 3 show the breakdown in expenditures for fiscal years ending 1973 and 1974, respectively. Since only expenditures for the lodges could be segregated as the money-making activity, expenditures for cabins, recreation vehicle charges, etc. had to be included with parks, recreation areas, and historical and cultural facilities. The findings again show the expenditures and population per district to be obviously disproportionate: in 1973, \$23.59 was expended per use on those facilities believed to maximize return compared to only \$0.08 per use in all (98%) of the other facilities; in 1974, the gap was not as large, with \$13.99 spent for facilities believed to maximize return compared to \$0.35 per use for all (98%) of the other facilities.

The findings indicate that Oklahoma's recreational policy is heavily oriented toward industrial tourism. The extent of this orientation cannot be more precisely evaluated until (a) the data are compared to results from other states, (b) such data become more usable in quantity and form and (c) the measuring instrument is more refined.

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