

## Present and Future Leisure Activities in Turku: Concise Analysis of Survey

Agnieszka Kozakiewicz

Department of Geography, University of Turku

**Abstract:** This article serves as an introduction to the research, which was made for the doctoral dissertation. The fundamental data used in this paper comes mostly from the surveys, which were made in 2006 and 2007 in Turku, Finland. The main aim of the paper is to present a concise overview of a very important part of human's life – leisure. The first part of the text contains a few definitions and types of this yet relatively unpopular topic in geography. Following parts focus mostly on the leisure activities in the city of Turku – both recently and in the nearest future. The last part contains a short summary of the article.

### The definition of leisure

Leisure it is one of the most common activities in the contemporary society. Not many people realize that they devote many hours a day to it and there are people who do not even realize that this term does exist. So the first what has to be done is finding an answer to a question what “leisure” actually is. According to Smith (1983) defining recreation is impossible, as every scientist and philosopher sees this problem in another, different way. Although many have spent their lives trying to define it, no one yet has received the enduring support of a majority of researchers. In his opinion everyone has his own intuitive definition of this term, thus there is no need of explicitly verbalizing it. The same problem occurs with the term of leisure. There exists no clear definition concerning what leisure is, as this term may be defined in many different ways.

The first definition to start from is a very basic one, concerning leisure. According to *Dictionary of Geography* by Mayhew (1997: 297) leisure is: “That time left over after

time taken for work and other obligations. The term indicates that this time is spent on activities which are worthwhile in themselves to the individual.” This definition states that leisure is the time spent on activities which are important for people for the activities’ own sake. According to this, geography of leisure researches the spatial way of people’s behavior in their leisure time. This description gives the idea of geographical approach to this problem, which puts emphasis on both the spatial as well as sociological aspects of the leisure activities. The other important trait of this description is use of the term free-time to define the leisure. It is very popular and convenient to use, but there are scientists, who strongly oppose this point of view. Van Moorst (1982) claims that many definitions reduce the leisure to time free from duties, such as work or sleep, while people should have right for free will of spending time in the way they prefer. He also states that definitions of leisure may be extended by many various characteristics, which would develop its meaning, such as involuntary role of obligations, psychological understanding

of freedom, etc. Vickerman (1980: 192) obeys the above-mentioned convention by inviting the reader to “take leisure time to be roughly equivalent to free time, that time left over after meeting commitments to work and such essential human capital maintenance as sleeping, eating and personal hygiene.” Rojek (1985) – another defender of distinction between free-time and leisure – thinks that definition of leisure has three values: it is precise; it is value free and can be operationalized in research.

Leisure can be explained also in a wider sense, as a time when one has free time, which means that one does “nothing”, or as a time which is spent on activities and movements. But in both cases the action performed has to satisfy the person in question. And basing on mentioned statements, it can be surely said that leisure time and free time cannot be used as direct synonyms. Herbert in 1988 described leisure as time over which an individual exercises choice and undertakes activities in a free, voluntary way (Hall & Page 2001). According to Stockdale (1985) three main ways of using this term can be distinguished: Firstly, period of time, activity or state of mind in which choice is the dominant feature; in this sense leisure is a form of “free time” for an individual. Secondly, an objective view in which leisure is perceived as the opposite of work and is defined as non-work or residual time. Thirdly, a subjective view which emphasizes leisure as a qualitative concept in which leisure activities take on a meaning only within the context of individual perceptions and belief systems and can therefore occur at any time in any settings. For Roberts (1979) the easiest way to define leisure is to say what it is not. In this negative, yet surprisingly complete way he expresses his

opinion that: “Leisure time can be defined as time that is not obligated and leisure activities can be defined as activities that are non-obligatory” (Roberts 1979: 6).

All of these explanations form a picture of leisure as a pleasure time, during which people do only what they decide to do and what makes them satisfied. Even reading this description can create the feeling of leisure being a time filled with pleasure, peace and totally dependent on individual’s free will. Still many other, diverse definitions may be quoted – such as many explanations of leisure that can be found in other books by Rojek, Roberts and many other researchers, but there is not enough space, nor need to compare all of them. There is one more though, which is the most important of all of the definitions, as it was one of the first, which were created in the beginning of the sociology of leisure. It is the definition by Dumazedier (1960: 526): “Leisure consists of a number of occupations in which the individual may indulge of his own free will - either to rest, to amuse himself, to add to his knowledge or improve his skills disinterestedly or to increase his voluntary participation in the life of the community after discharging his professional, family and social duties.” This is by far the most complete and exhaustive definition, as it contains many aspects of the leisure term as it is. After many years from creating it, he wrote a whole chapter in his book about developing of this definition, relation between work and leisure and other important aspects connected with defining the meaning of this term (Dumazedier 1974: 67-76, 107-137).

## Leisure types

Leisure activities can be divided into many types. In his surveys Cushman (Cushman et al. 2005) presented over 200 activities, which were chosen by respondents. Some of them can be grouped, but many are so specific that they can only stand alone. The five main groups, which Cushman distinguished are:

- Arts and cultural activities (ballet, circus, flower arranging, opera, painting, concerts, theatre, making videos)
- Home-based activities (car repairs, computer or video games, gardening for pleasure, listening to the music, playing with the children, reading books, relax (doing nothing), watching TV)
- Outdoor recreation (backpacking, bird watching, parks, walk in the country)
- Social and informal recreation (auctions,

church, driving for pleasure, going out, hobbies, pub/café/tea house visit, sauna or massage, shopping for pleasure, traveling overseas)

- Sport/physical recreation (aerobic, ball games, hockey, jogging, netball, sailing, self-defense, swimming, yoga)

This is by far the most often used classification of leisure activities, which has also been an inspiration for preparing the survey, on which this article was based. In the survey leisure was divided into groups in respect to 11 attributes (Table 1). The character of activities allows for describing the leisure preferences among Turku citizens and gives a view for potential future way of spending this part of time. This way of categorization helped in analyzing the data and allowed for grouping the activities according to the respondent's preferences. Further details concerning the survey can

Table 1. The character of leisure activities.

<b>Physical activity</b>	purely static	light motion, recreational	motion	sports
<b>Place</b>	stationary, at home	stationary, outside home	dynamic, at one place	traveling
<b>Finances, expenses</b>	no expense	cheap	moderately expensive	expensive
<b>Intellectual effort</b>	no effort	passive effort	cognitive effort	creative effort
<b>Danger, risk level</b>	safe and secure	safe but thrilling	moderately risky	dangerous
<b>Required skills</b>	none needed	basic skills	good skills	excellence skills
<b>Required knowledge</b>	none needed	basic knowledge	good knowledge	excellence knowledge
<b>Fashion, cool factor</b>	totally mundane, inappropriate	casual, typical	popular, nice	fashionable, cool
<b>Technological advancement</b>	old-fashioned	contemporary	modern	futuristic, hi-tech
<b>Relationship with nature</b>	nature is not included	nature is a background	nature is helpful, but not needed	nature is essential
<b>Impact on environment</b>	destructive	harmful	none	positive

be found in the latter part of the article (see also Table 2).

Hardy (1985) presented the results of McGoldrick's (1983) study, in which she described nine distinct categories of ways of spending time by retired people. According to the research the following types could be distinguished:

- **Rest and relax** (people who in leisure time read books, watch TV, walk or work in gardens)
- **Home and family** (people who prefer to spend more time with partners, helping in home works)
- **Hobbyists** (people who have hobbies and spend most of their time on it, like philately, model-making, painting)
- **Good timers** (people who wants to have fun, travel a lot and have a wide social life)
- **Committee and society** (type of "open people" who spend their time working for others as a chairman, deputy)
- **Volunteers** (people who like to work for others in churches, animal shelters, local charity)
- **Continuing education** (group of "everlasting students", people who feel hunger of knowledge and have time for studying)
- **Part-time employees** (people who want to feel needed, sometimes because they have lack of money, but mostly because they like to work)
- **New entrepreneurs** (mostly relatively young pensioners, who finally have time to start their own business)

Although this typology was prepared in early 80s, it can still be used today not only for retired people, but for all the citizens. Similar types can be used also for working

people, but one should remember that they have less time for leisure. The other aspect is that sometimes working people are too exhausted to spend time in a way they would like to, so some can be only theoretical members of a given type. The last two types are mostly typical for retired people, but as far as the remaining types are concerned, one can successfully attribute any person to the type. Consequently a question emerges, if the same types shall exist in the future? Or – what is more probable – the technological development and changes in the world shall cause people to create new, unthought-of yet, groups. The problem of the preferences in spending leisure time by people is still open and it will always depend on individual characteristic of a person. But as Hardy (1985) note, the important matter is not to drift, but to choose the form appropriate for us.

## Research methodology

The research bases on the survey, which was performed in two rounds – May 2006 and April 2007. The questionnaire contained 4 parts (Demographics, Present, Maps and Future), in which respondents had to answer a few questions. The questionnaires were delivered to citizens according to the place where they live. Altogether there were 1600 questionnaires delivered to over 830 households. After four weeks there were almost 300 filled responses returned. The data, which were collected during the survey, were analyzed and presented in graphs and tables. The descriptive part of filled-in questionnaires evoked an interesting image of people's leisure activities. The graphical part – especially the map part

– allowed for creating the map of potential leisure spaces and possible areas for future investments. Questions connected with future may form the basis for creating the scenarios of future leisure activities in people’s opinions and their choices for spending leisure time. Every part of the survey contained questions which have not been very popular and consequently many respondents did not answer to them. The results and wider analysis shall be available in author’s dissertation.

### Most popular leisure activities

According to the results of the surveys people in Turku spend more time on leisure during the weekends than during week days, which is quite self evident. But still, statistically the amount of time spent for leisure during the weekdays is close to 1/3 of the day time (Figure 1) and almost half of the day during weekends (Figure 2). It shows how important it is to spend this time in a proper way. That is why this research

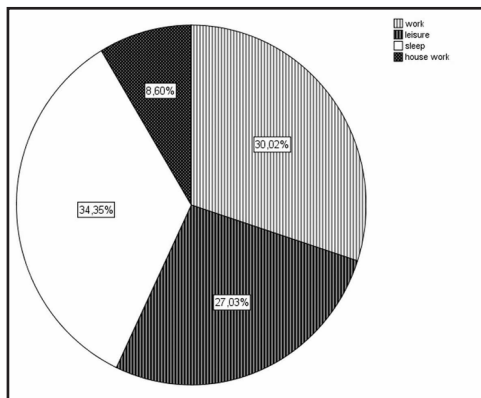


Figure 1. The scheme of spending time in Turku during week days.

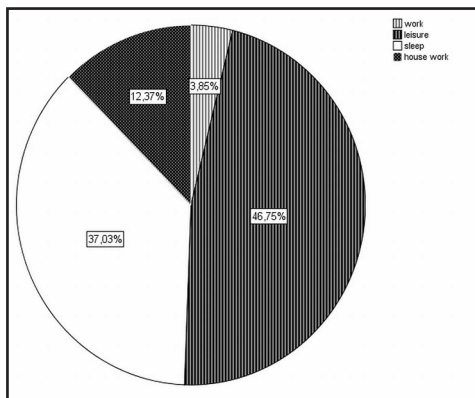


Figure 2. The scheme of spending time in Turku during weekends.

focused on opinions of people, who have a right to decide where and in what way they are going to spend their time.

During the survey, people were questioned in respect to what do they do when they have spare time. The answers were rather interesting and informative, as most of the respondents spent this time in a very static way. The survey shows which types of leisure activities are preferred by inhabitants (Table 2). It is clear, that people preferred leisure activities, which did not require any significant investment money- or skill-wise. But what is interesting, is a fact that in a very technologically advanced society, such as Finland, people prefer to return to basics during their rest time. This is an aspect which calls for further elaboration in consequent papers.

Thus, a very important and partially anticipated data emerged – the one of the importance of nature and environment in leisure time. Most of the respondents answered that during their leisure activities nature has an essential meaning and that they consciously try not to cause any negative influence on the environment either, while spending their free time.

Table 2. Preferences of leisure activities' types in Turku.

	none %	small %	medium%	high %
<b>Physical activity</b>	12,50	<u>40,48</u>	35,71	11,31
<b>Place</b>	25,73	<u>50,29</u>	12,87	11,11
<b>Finances, expenses</b>	10,00	<u>59,41</u>	25,29	5,29
<b>Intellectual effort</b>	29,34	23,35	<u>33,53</u>	13,77
<b>Danger, risk level</b>	<u>56,21</u>	21,30	21,30	1,18
<b>Required skills</b>	27,27	<u>52,73</u>	15,15	4,85
<b>Required knowledge</b>	25,90	<u>57,83</u>	13,25	3,01
<b>Fashion, cool factor</b>	7,78	<u>68,86</u>	22,75	0,60
<b>Technological advancement</b>	<u>43,03</u>	<u>43,03</u>	13,33	0,61
<b>Relationship with nature</b>	6,47	25,29	22,94	<u>45,29</u>
<b>Impact on environment</b>	0,59	5,29	<u>78,70</u>	14,79

Basing on these results and on the answers for subsequent questions, at the end of the research one could make the list of the most preferred leisure activities among Turku's citizens. The first ten places on the list were as follows:

1. Reading 96,47%
2. Listening to the music 96,27%
3. Spending time with friends 95,13%
4. Watching TV, video or DVD 93,67%
5. Going to sauna and massage 88,98%
6. Spending time with family and pets 88,85%
7. Walking or jogging 87,09%
8. Using the Internet 79,09%
9. Visiting café or tea houses 77,11%
10. Visiting library 69,87%

There is also an interesting distinction between spending leisure time during various seasons. Of course, there are pastimes which can be undertaken only during a given season (like skiing or sailing), but there are still plenty of others, which are most popular during the summer or winter and have no obvious dependence on the seasonal weather conditions. The main factor is the time which can be spent on

leisure, as during summer holidays people tend to have more time for themselves and that most probably is why Turku citizens prefer playing tennis or walking through parks during the summer – as the survey demonstrates. Interesting situation took place, when inhabitants were asked about spending time at churches and voluntary actions, as well as spending time in closed areas such as museums, theatres or auction houses, as they mostly decided to visit these organizations during the winter time, neglecting them in summer.

As it was presented on this example, it is important not only to spend the leisure time in a proper way (according to the preferences of citizens), but one takes also into account the weather conditions and seasons of the year. As it was already mentioned, new technologies are extensively used during the leisure time, but they do not have to be the most modern ones. TV sets, music players or even computers used for Internet connections do not have to be newest ones, as long as they work properly and fulfill their purpose satisfactorily. On the other hand, the place of nature in leisure activities can be found in many areas

of the performed study. It is of outmost importance during walking or jogging time, it can assist when spending time with friends, family and pets, etc. But still, the main problem according to the survey is the stasis of leisure activities. Although citizens of Turku seem to be very active, their preferences show that many of them still would choose the motionless way of resting. This is one of most vital problems connected with the topic of spending the leisure time.

## How about the future?

It is known, how people in Turku spent their time now, but what about the future? How would they want to rest and what do they want to do then? Asking these questions led to creating an image of the possible and probable scenarios for leisure activities in Turku. According to the survey (see Table 3) citizens are planning to spend time inside their homes or in closed neighborhoods, in a similar way to the present, but with an intention of doing it in a more healthy way. Although it still does not seem overly dynamic, it gives a hope that a future society will think more about spending time in a healthy, proper manner and taking care of themselves. On the other hand the numbers do not pose a significantly large difference between those two ways of spending time (more and less healthy), so it still seems that there is still a need of emphasize and publicize the reasonable, healthy way of life.

Table 3. How citizens of Turku are going to spend their leisure time in future.

In a more dynamic way	29	8,84
In a more static way	20	6,09
At home	76	23,17
Outside of home	61	18,60
More healthy	43	13,11
Less healthy	34	10,37
In the same way	53	16,16
In some other way	12	3,66
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100,00 %</b>

With reference to Heinonen (quoted in Kiiskilä & Kalenoja 2001: 8-10) three types of leisure habits can be distinguished:

- **Virtual Society.** The amount of free time increases, partially because the time of work and leisure are mixed, although it is strongly polarized – some people have plenty of free time, some have none. Leisure is focused more on virtual world than on reality.
- **Eco-Society.** Leisure time is strongly connected with nature, ecology and health. The issue of outmost importance is spending time outdoor – mostly walking, cycling, and eco-tourism.
- **Experience Society.** As the consumption is growing, the leisure activities are more focused on the commercial behavior and consumption entertainment. There is a need of specialized sports and traveling.

Knowing the preferences of Turku's inhabitants, it can be said that society in Turku aims to gain the Eco-Society level, although there is still a lot of pressure connected with hi-tech development all over the world. But still Finns are more environmentally oriented society than the general world's population and there is a chance that instead adhering to the

worldwide trend of modern and futuristic way of life, they shall still focus on a natural way of living and resting instead.

The other possible vision of the future was presented by Watts (1983; see also Handy 1985). In his opinion there are four possible scenarios for the future: the unemployment scenario, the leisure scenario, the employment scenario and the work scenario. According to leisure scenario, society will divide in the future into two groups of people – those who work and those who consume. The consumers will sustain most of the society, whose main role will be leisure and consuming products made by the machines and the small amount of people. The proper standard of living will be supported by some kind of national income schema, where government would pay people for their way of life.

In the most optimistic version citizens would have a lot of time and opportunities to develop the art and recreation sectors, the community life and educational level would achieve the highest level ever, etc. But the problem connected with this scenario, described by Watts (1983), is that there were already examples in a history when people were spending their lives on leisure and never did this situation last long. It is possible, that this time it would look slightly different, but still the experience of the past generations teaches us that tale of humanity is circular and history does repeat itself. Thus it is very probable that this time a very similar situation shall occur. The technological development in some way directs the society to a scenario of this sort, but still it depends on the people in which direction the situation will follow.

## Conclusions

People currently live in a hurry and they do not stop to think about leisure, however they still are bound to relax after work in some way or other. They do not realize, that during the last several years, work started to gradually replace repose. Vast numbers of citizens are becoming workaholics. People have to work longer and more intensively, sometimes even over 12 hours per day, in order to achieve success, even if they are compelled to resign from their spare time. Despite that, there is still hope that people will start to think more about themselves and their families, rather than about money. That would cause a breakthrough in the existing situation and there would be a viable chance for people to become happier and more relaxed then presently. People should find a solution to integrate paid work and the rest of their lives, attaining what is often referred to as ‘work-life balance’ (Lewis 2003). Thus one of the possible solutions to their problem is to create more places for spending their spare time in the way they choose.

Citizens of Turku spend about 1/3 of their everyday life on leisure. Therefore, it is extremely important for them to do it in a proper way. One thing is that during leisure time they should do whatever makes them happy, but on the other hand they should have an opportunity to rest and brace to work more efficiently, as well as sustaining their health. There is a global pressure that people should rest actively, but what if a person works for living by the labor of muscles and for him or her resting is connected only with a calm, motion-less activity?

On the other hand, during last years, since the technological revolution (Lewis



2003), life in the world demands more and more effort and commitment from people. High technology is developing around the world and making life less mobile, so there is a need for physical exercises and dynamic resting style for people. Citizens need more diversity during their leisure activities, not by living only in virtual reality or – conversely – totally resigning from benefits of the technology, but they have to find the golden mean in their lives. This article has just scratched a surface of a problem, which shall become of the main issues of the future society and as such shall and will be explored more in depth in the near future.

## References

- Cushman, G. (2005). *Free Time and Leisure Participation: International Perspectives*. Wallingford, Oxfordshire.
- Dumazedier, J. (1960). Current problems of the sociology of leisure. *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 4, 522-531.
- Dumazedier, J. (1974). *Sociology of leisure*. Elsevier, Oxford.
- Hall, C. M. & S. Page (2001). *The geography of tourism and recreation. Environment, place and space*. Routledge, New York.
- Handy, C. (1985). *The Future of Work. A guide to a Changing Society*. Basil Blackwell, New York.
- Kiiskilä, K. & H. Kalenoja (2001). Leisure time mobility – Future trends and sustainable development. From International Conference in Kouvola, *Sustainable Information Society – Values and Everyday Life*. September 27-28, 2001.
- Lewis, S. (2003). The integration of paid work and the rest of life. Is postindustrial work the new leisure? *Leisure Studies*, vol. 22, 343-355.
- Mayhew, S. (1997). *Dictionary of Geography*. Oxford, London.
- McGoldrick, A. (1983). Company early retirement schemes and private pension scheme options: scope for leisure and new lifestyles. *Leisure Studies*, vol. 2, 187-202.
- Roberts, K. (1970). *Leisure*. Longman, Essex.
- Rojek, C. (1985). *Capitalism and leisure theory*. Tavistock Publications, London.
- Stockdale, J. (1985). People's conceptions of leisure. Leisure: Politics, Planning and People. *Leisure Studies Association Publications*, 22.
- Van Moorst, H. (1982). Leisure and social theory. *Leisure Studies*, vol. 1, 157-69.
- Vickerman, R. (1980). The New Leisure Society: An Economic Analysis. *Futures*, vol. 10.
- Watts, A. (1983). *Education, employment and the future of work*. Open University Press, Milton Keynes