

Post-Adolescent Society as a Challenge for Education

Martina Kočerová

University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Faculty of Theology, Department of Pedagogy

Received 28th September 2017 / final version received 3rd January 2018 /
accepted 11th January 2018

Abstract: The article deals with the phenomenon of *kidult* and a *post-adolescent* society, which is associated with a phenomenon called *infantilisation*. It is a theoretical study aimed at showing the potential of leisure education in the prevention of the appearance of *kidult*. The article focuses primarily on leisure education and its potential to prevent the appearance of a *kidult* lifestyle (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013). *Kidult*, *adultescent*, or *rejuvenile* – the phenomenon linked to the emergence of post-adolescent society. The unwillingness to adopt a social role corresponding with one's age is the main characteristic of this lifestyle. Thus, this society has developed into a post-adolescent society which lacks responsible citizens who are willing to make decisions and face their consequences. This lifestyle results in a dysfunctional civil society, thus also affecting democracy. The infantilised culture, however, penetrates education, which does not develop critical thinking and responsible citizenship; on the other hand, individualism is encouraged under the label of liberal choice. This education simply passes on 'ready-made' facts instead of leading to thinking, and it supports pseudo-values artificially produced by mass media (Barber, 1984, 2001, 2007). Post-adolescent society is a challenge especially for pedagogy, whose aim should be to develop critical and creative thinking, and reflexive practice, and not only in formal but especially in non-formal education.

Keywords: *kidult*, *kidulthood*, *rejuvenile*, *adultescent*, lifestyle, education, leisure, leisure education

The phenomenon of *kidult* (Buckingham, 2008; Kaklamanidou & Tally, 2014), widely discussed in the world, seems not to have raised much interest in the Czech environment thus far. However, one must not think that it is because Czech society has not been affected by this phenomenon. As in other economically developed countries, leisure time, i.e., time that people can use at their own discretion, is a common part of life in the Czech Republic. Their standard of living enables them to access a fairly broad spectrum of leisure

activities, which they arrange for themselves, or they make use of the offer of numerous organisations, centres, or associations.

For many people, leisure time is a period when it is possible, even necessary, to relax after work, whether actively or passively. For others, it is a time of self-realisation and compensating for the needs, desires or wishes that have not been fulfilled during work-time. Many want to have fun in their free time, enjoy life and, perhaps paradoxically, forget about the worries that life brings. What people expect of free time points to their conception of life as a whole. And, precisely, uncertainty about the future, the responsibility associated with adulthood, and not coming to terms with one's own mortality are factors contributing to the appearance of the phenomenon called *kidult*, *adultescent*, or *rejuvenile* (Buckingham, 2008; Kaklamanidou & Tally, 2014; Wedge, 2012).

These terms are used to describe a lifestyle marked by the unwillingness to adopt a social role appropriate for one's age. They are either children who prematurely try to be adults, or more frequently adults who refuse to acknowledge their adulthood and maintain a teenage lifestyle. In their free time, they engage in teenage activities and often go even further and spend all of their time in that manner (Crawford, 2009).

While during the time of adolescence they ought to have disentangled themselves from dependence on parents, constituted their life aspirations, and completed forming their self-confidence, by the time of early adulthood they are still unable to become independent, have no fixed attitudes or interests, or a developed ability of self-reflection. It is no surprise when an adolescent is anxious about the future, but personality maturation ought to result in an ability to come to terms with these worries and accept responsibility for one's life, and ultimately for society. Adulthood ought to be accompanied by the ability to adopt social roles corresponding with that age, which is also manifested in finding a job, establishing a deep partner relationship, and starting a family (Erikson, 1998).

And precisely in this respect we can observe tendencies echoing a whole number of facts and changes, not only in the social, political and demographical sphere. It is a tendency to stay young and stagnate in a certain scheme, which can result in the feeling of identity loss and the associated negative self-reflection (Nakonečný, 1997).

How these tendencies ought to be eliminated, or, rather, how the process of maturation ought to be influenced so that adolescents can successfully face these tendencies, is a question also for leisure education.

1 Kidult, adulescent, rejuvenile and the others

Those in the title above are adults or near-adults who refuse to assume the social role associated with their age, and thereby also responsibility for their lives. They are adults who, despite their age, are still living with their parents. If they work, they very often change jobs. In partner relationships, the situation is similar: either they live as singles, or their relationships are merely superficial and temporary. Such a lifestyle is labelled with different variations corresponding to the meaning of the concept of *kidult*, formed by combining two words: *kid* and *adult*. Kidult is a name used for a phenomenon which can often be encountered today, when persons of adult age persist in the behaviour of children (Harris & Harris, 2005).

Kidults resist leaving the teen age, want to stay young and seek to postpone, or entirely eliminate, their aging future. They select different means to achieve that end, some of the typical ones being clothing style and certain activities; the merging of virtual reality with the real world, especially by means of various online games, is also characteristic. As a consumer group they are not negligible, as evinced by the consumer goods offered. Many shops specialise in kidults, who are frequently well-to-do and want to have fun in life. The range of goods offered is broad, from clothes, videogames, mobile phone covers, fashion accessories, films, to furniture, books and food. The entertainment industry also participates here with its offer of leisure activities focusing on entertainment and adventure (Neild & Carysforth, 2004).

But the term kidult is also used to describe the opposite phenomenon, namely the effort of children and teenagers to prematurely become adults. The industry reacts to both aspects of the kidult phenomenon by manufacturing products for children with an adult design and toys for adults (Morris, 2009).

This seems not to be a passing trend, but rather a permanent one, especially in so-called Western society. This is witnessed, for example, by the enormous success of films such as *Shrek* or *Harry Potter*, based on books focusing primarily on teenagers. Another example is Disneyland, an entertainment park which has been among the most popular adult entertainment

destinations for many years. Kidult is encountered in the USA, in European countries, but also in Japan. Kidult is linked to leisure time and disposability, made possible by the excess of wealth in those societies (Noxon, 2006).

2 The roots of *kidult*

When the play *Peter Pan* was first staged in 1904 in London, its author, J. M. Barrie, announced something totally new. At the time, no one could have guessed that the character of a boy who does not want to grow up would mark the appearance of an entirely new phenomenon. The first juvenile hero became a sensation and a symbol of imminent social changes and the developments of the new century. He was a character who shared his ambiguous feelings concerning adulthood in public. Peter Pan was not merely a fairy tale; it clearly pointed towards the appearance of a new kind of adult.

Peter Pan was not the first work to reach both children and adults. That had certainly been previously achieved by *Alice in Wonderland* and many others, but in *Peter Pan* these tendencies culminated. He was an embodiment of feelings which many adults had been harbouring but were afraid to express aloud. Peter Pan spoke for them. And, on the other hand, he became a mentor for further generations of adults. Peter Pan expressed what many were experiencing but did not express, as it was unsuitable for adults to do so. The next generation was already growing up with the recognition that these are legitimate feelings associated with adulthood. However, we must go deeper in order to understand that a juvenile boy who does not want to grow up became a hero for many adults.

Before the Industrial Revolution, people did not think much in terms of adulthood and childhood; life was perceived in a more holistic way. While numerous transition rites associated with passing to adulthood existed, these show that adulthood was perceived as the central and most important part of life. The concept of the rights of children (Key, 1909; Overman, 2011) first appeared in the 19th century, and the 19th century was also a time when adulthood was marked by clear boundaries.

In the Victorian era, adulthood was a synonym for character. An adult was someone who had attained the virtues of kindness, decency, integrity, loyalty, honesty and self-possession. Adulthood was thus a mark of moral virtue and an adult was someone who was able to take care of himself and his family.

At the end of the 19th century numerous guides were published containing advice as to how an adult person was to behave, dress, speak, spend free time, and think. In order to be a true adult, one had to incessantly control his thoughts and behaviour, suppress his spontaneity, emotions, and impulses. Self-control, formality, and solemnity became the central values of adulthood (Overman, 2011).

The gravity of adulthood's demands did not change in the 20th century. Adulthood is a long period of life, in which the greatest challenges one faces are finding employment and a partner for life. It is a period perceived by many as oppressive, associated with work and family obligations, as opposed to the time of childhood and adolescence. As a result of the strong movement for child rights and other initiatives, childhood became a time of challenges, freedom, carelessness and joy. An abyss was created between childhood and adulthood, which had previously not existed (Noxon, 2006).

So, on the one hand, the trend of kidult is a natural expression of the fears of an adulthood perceived as oppressive and the desire to keep the freedom and joyfulness of childhood. But, on the other hand, the trend is at present amplified by a market based on pragmatic calculation. As Barber states in his paper *The Global Infantilization* (2001), the world is divided into two parts. While one has a great number of unfulfilled needs and does not have sufficient purchasing power, the other is sufficiently wealthy and its basic needs are fulfilled. For the market, which needs to produce, the key factor is consumption. And the solution is to be able to persuade those who have money to buy that which in fact they do not need. In contemporary Western society, the market, assisted by the mass media, has evidently been successful in creating artificial needs. It focuses on both children and adults. The situation in which children want to be older than they are while adults want to be younger than they in fact are has been termed *post-adolescent culture* (Barber, 2001).

In that way, childhood is shortened and adulthood is transformed into a post-adolescent lifestyle pursuing a single goal: to forget about the responsibility implied by adulthood (cf. the concept *emerging adulthood*; Arnett & Tanner, 2006). A post-adolescent society lacks responsible citizens with mature attitudes, willing to bear the burden of decision-making. As a result, this lifestyle is incompatible with a functional civic society, or democracy. The *infantilised culture* prefers play to work, immediate satisfaction to long-term

contentment, feeling to reason, image to word, easiness to difficulty, simplicity to complexity, and speed to slowness.

Infantilisation also permeates education, which does not develop critical thinking and responsible citizenship, but fosters individualism under the label of free choice. The *infantilist ethos* is linked to the ideology of privatisation, marketing brand goods and the overall homogenisation of the world. Carefree consumption and private interests have taken the place of responsible citizenship and thus opened up a path to a totalitarian system that brings fast and easy solutions without the need to take responsibility for them (Barber, 2007).

The global economy has been successful in homogenising the world, since the kidult lifestyle is linked to the naive idea of living in a world in which an individual has the right to everything that might make him happy. These are especially infinite consumption, entertainment, care, youth, privileges, life-long learning, education, development, motivation, and self-realisation. On the other hand, an individual also has a duty, namely to be happy, which, however, includes no self-denial or self-sacrifice. On the contrary, the individual is located on a spiral celebrating his personality having no finite horizon (Costea, Crump, & Holm, 2005).

3 From kidult to post-adolescent society

While in the past the phenomenon of kidult was encountered in the form of individuals, at present there is already talk of a post-adolescent society as a whole. The fear of adulthood is no longer isolated in the life of an individual; it is a universally shared sentiment.

For young people, adulthood is something in the future, so one could expect that if they fear adulthood, they also fear the future. But research (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013) has shown that this need not be the case. For young people, the future is close in meaning to the concept of *knowledge*, and far from the concept of *obligation*. Both concepts are very close in meaning to the concept of *I*, as opposed to the concept of *obligation*. So young people associate the *future* with what is as yet unknown, inviting them to investigate, explore and cognise it; it is not associated with fear and anxiety, but rather with adventure and playfulness. It is something intimately close to the life of the young person, but it is not associated with obligation, as opposed to adulthood. So, adulthood can pose a threat to a future envisioned in these terms.

So, if manifestations of the kidult lifestyle can at present be recognised throughout the young generation, it is no longer the case of there being merely a few adults in need of some kind of intervention. There is a post-adolescent society which requires a more global reaction. That is why pedagogy needs to address the kidult trend and leisure education cannot remain apart.

The general aim of pedagogy is the development of an individual's personality and his/her integration into society, that is, the inclusion that is a prerequisite for a functioning society (UNESCO, 2017; Medel-Anonuevo, Ohsaco, & Mach, 2001). In other words, it is a willingness and ability towards freedom, solidarity and responsibility, then towards creative self-activity and communicative behaviour, and finally to social engagement and participation in social life (Opaschowski, 1996; Medel-Anonuevo et al., 2001). Leisure education shares this general goal (the relative autonomy of an individual in society), but at the same time it emphasises the development of the art of thinking and dealing with time, not only with leisure time, i.e., with life itself (*leisure time competence*). This involves the question of the order of values, and meaning of life (Opaschowski, 1996).

In other words, it is a development of social, communicative, cultural and creative competences that enable individuals to attain social behaviour that offset the tendency to escape from society and the privatisation of interests. It should be a counterbalance to a lifestyle oriented to performance and consumption. It should lead to prevention against fixating to a particular role and a tendency to isolation (Opaschowski, 1996; Medel-Anonuevo et al., 2001).

Pedagogy, therefore, has its social and preventive role (Pávková, Hájek, & Hofbauer, 2002) even in the case of the appearance of kidult lifestyle. Pedagogical formation can be focused on individuals who already manifest the signs of kidult, i.e., young people in early adulthood, or children.

If we start with the psychosocial development of man according to Erikson (1998), personality maturation takes place in adolescence. At the end of this period, the young person should be able to understand the meaningfulness of his/her life, become independent of his/her parents, and have a value system in place as the basis for attitudes and decisions in adulthood. This is also closely related to the ability to take responsibility for oneself, in one's life, but also for a relationship with a life partner, a family, or the society in which one lives (Erikson, 1998).

Interventions in adulthood, therefore, run into considerable limits in the form of an already formed personality, where deeper changes are not impossible, but are limited by the person's own decision. Another limit is the time necessary for the required change. In the case of children, it is different because the process of personality formation is in progress and forms the basis for the future adult personality (Čáp & Mareš, 2001; Piaget & Inhelder, 2008; Vygotsky, 2014).

Pedagogical work should thus be directed mainly to pre-school and younger school age, or adolescence. It is a period when the child is exposed to the influence of family, as well as school and school facilities. Especially the parents and educators can have a major influence on preventing the development of the kidult lifestyle.

4 Kidult – an enemy, or a challenge?

Kidults are persons who are adult by age yet who cannot, or do not want to, take on the burden of adulthood; on the other hand, they succumb to the influence of the advertising industry, which fosters and promotes the kidult lifestyle (Section 1 and 2).

Therefore, when considering the prevention of the appearance of kidult lifestyle (as discussed in Section 3), this should include specific considerations: the formation of attitudes towards adulthood, or the duties that make adulthood unattractive and unwanted; and enhancing resilience to the impact of the advertising industry, and thus forming the criteria that form the basis for reasoning and decision making.

From the above-mentioned research (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013), it is clear that the core cluster, which is related to self-perception in young people, is made up of family and friends. This socially extended self is completed with concepts that reflect the element of self-realisation, entertainment or exploration, and knowledge. Knowledge is then closely related to activities that bring experience, development of interests, creativity, and creative thinking (e.g., music, travel). From this, it can be assumed that personal experience is key for personal development. It is not possible to merely pass on information and appeal to the importance of accepting the role of an adult (extrinsic motivation), but this importance should be experienced, which is possible based on deeper consideration, reflection, and connection

with personal experience (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013). In particular, it is about the constitution of an intrinsic motivation when the individual decides to accept the role of an adult on the basis of an internal interest in it (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The kidult lifestyle is oriented to free-time, in which the passive consumption of the offered programmes prevails (see Section 1), and the very nature of free time, which is the freedom of choice, is denied. One can freely choose leisure activities in his free time, but in reality he stops being free because he “allows himself to be seduced” usually by commercial consumer leisure offers. Leisure education responds to this situation in accordance with its objective, which includes the development of critical thinking: revealing a tendency to consume; the systematic creation of defensive mechanisms against pressure that restricts freedom; and consideration of the social significance of consumer leisure offers (Opaschowski, 1996; Frantz, 2017).

Therefore, pedagogy ought to pursue three goals: constituting and strengthening internal motivation; reinforcing resistance to external stimuli; and interconnecting these two spheres.

If an individual is to adopt an adult social role, which brings along not only enjoyment, but also responsibility, decision-making, self-discipline, self-denial, and numerous other expressions of maturity, then he must be internally motivated to do so. This means that his attitude to adulthood must ultimately be positive; he must not conceive of it as of a threat. Such an attitude cannot stem from anything other than from values which can compete against the pseudo-values promoted by the advertising industry.

Therefore, pedagogy in general, but in the context of this article, especially leisure education cannot give up on *value education*. Quite the contrary, it ought to be:

[...] a response to a challenge, when responding and responsibility go hand in hand. In this sense, education is a general conversation between old age and youth concerning life. It establishes all the essential respects and dimensions of human existence in dialogue. [...] Only deficient forms of education can be limited to mediating value knowledge as finished, to a transfer, or a transmission, of known items of knowledge or value codes. [...] Value education is concerned with values as a means of influencing an individual's actions, his motivation and life planning. (Pelcová, 2013, p. 293)

Resistance to external stimuli does not mean that one closes up against these stimuli; it means developing ways of thinking and reflecting which will make it possible to evaluate and classify them. In pedagogical practice, we speak in this context of critical thinking, which ought to consist in reflection based on criteria. But if we were content with this definition, then the question necessarily ought to be raised as to who, and based on what, formulates these criteria and how we can be certain that the established criteria will correspond to the educational goal (in the context of the discussed topic, they will lead to the prevention of the kidult lifestyle). Here we again return to value education and its importance, since critical thinking is connected with evaluation, which is based on values.

Critical thinking cannot be separated from creative thinking (as mentioned in Section 3), which is associated with the ability to form images in the mind, where the emotional component of the personality is significantly involved in the process. And precisely involving emotions provides substantial support in making choices and decisions, since emotions show the subjective significance of a given stimulus. In the context of the currently experienced postmodern situation of increasing globalisation, critical and creative thinking are an important means of protection against manipulation and feelings of disillusionment with life (also including the phenomenon of kidult) (Zbudilová, 2013).

Value education and critical and creative thinking find interconnection in reflection, which results in overcoming and transforming uncertainties, doubts and conflict situations into a state which makes it possible to find balance in life (Dewey, 1933). So, education ought not to be merely an education based on values, which consists in stimulating the development of a sense for values, but also an education on evaluation and on the conscious reflection of one's own evaluations (Pelcová, 2013).

5 Leisure education as a means of preventing the appearance of kidults

Kidult is closely related to free time (Section 1) and the life role of an adult, which means looking to the future (Section 3).

Research (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013) has shown that the concept of *future* is much closer in meaning for young people to *leisure* time than *school* or

education. It is important for young people to belong somewhere and to have a background, to establish social contacts and to meet other people, to have the space to realise their interests and to expose themselves to new experiences. By contrast, *school* remains markedly remote.

The school atmosphere is often perceived as unfree by children because they have not decided to go to school on the basis of their inner conviction but must go to school. The content of school education does not depend on the child's wishes, ability, or skills, but is given by curricular documents (MŠMT, 2013–2017). It is someone other than the children themselves who decides what is good and necessary for them, what they should learn, and what the content and methods of verification will be. Only a little space is given to the free expression of ideas with subsequent discussion. Within the framework of school education, children can realise their interests and hobbies, and apply their talents usually only if it corresponds to the subjects which are taught (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013).

Although close social relations develop in a school, it is mostly because people naturally long for a relationship with other people (Section 4), rather than because the school atmosphere significantly supports the building of relationships. The class is a homogeneous group that usually does not correspond to everyday life. Unlike a heterogeneous group, it provides a narrower spectrum of social situations that need to be solved, and thus a narrower range of experiences (Gray, 2008).

Experience is also key in the process of learning and obtaining knowledge (Section 4). School education is realised through the mediation of foreign experience or the presentation of truths in the form of clearly formulated theoretical knowledge that the child should acquire. By this indoctrination, where the educator as the authority determines the correct path and the others are marked as the wrong one, the child's creativity and discovery of new paths are eliminated (Nováčková, 2008).

Learning from experience is limited by another factor in school, and that is time. It is clearly stated what a child has to learn, and for how long. But each child is different, comes from a different social and family environment, and has its own level of abilities and skills, different talents, a different character, and a different way of learning. In the limited space of school time, there is not enough time to discover, especially, the questions that motivate each child to find answers. This means that it is particularly about the handing

over of answers, often to questions that the child does not even ask at the time (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013).

Also, the approach that learning which is based on the rewards and punishments that often prevail in school seems to be disputable. The child does not act because he is convinced about the correctness of this behaviour, or because of the actions of others, but because the action is purely purposeful: the child wants to avoid punishment or to receive a reward. He does not relate to thought, consideration, and reflection (Section 4), but acts as he wishes. The child does not learn how to think about the causes and consequences of his actions, he does not learn to see the context and take other people into consideration, and he learns only to be obedient (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013).

In the context of kidult, it is crucial to learn to think of one's own existence, the meaning of life and being, as well as self-understanding. Such thinking requires time and peace, but also interaction with others and the possibility of dialogue. Thinking about yourself in interaction with others is conditioned by the atmosphere in which the child feels good and has a positive and open relationship, which goes together with trust, and this environment must be comprehensible, close, and build a sense of security. School is not usually such an environment, either for the reasons mentioned above or because the school often punishes those who express their own opinions. However, it is important for children's self-concept and self-assessment to have the opportunity to bring their own stimuli, to express their opinions, to discuss them, to consider and verify, to return to the topic and to explore it from different perspectives in connection with the thinking of others. The child also develops creativity, critical and creative thinking, builds a value system, develops communication (Section 4), learns how to treat his own autonomy, but also to be responsible for others (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013).

The aforementioned aspects do not necessarily affect the complete issue of education that takes place at school, and therefore it is evident that if learning takes place somewhere, it does not do so primarily (or prevalently) at school, i.e., in the sphere of formal education. Informal learning, on the other hand, which takes place in leisure time, can provide a more suitable environment, because it develops based on free decisions (intrinsic motivation). In the minds of young persons, it is not associated with obligations, which they meet based on an external motivation. If, on the contrary, an individual is

internally convinced of the correctness of a certain action, he can also accept an obligation. Leisure education therefore is not, and ought not to be, an education free from obligations, but free for obligations (in accordance with the leisure education goals discussed in Section 3).

Education (where the concept of education includes formal learning) in leisure time therefore cannot be a mere realisation of activities, no matter how attractive, enjoyable or meaningful they might be. If education in leisure time is erroneously identified with filling leisure time with activities, the result can be quite contrary. Rather than learn to deal with freedom, responsibility and perseverance, the child learns to consume leisure activities, have fun and selectively choose according to the momentary mood, which lays the foundation for a post-adolescent way of spending leisure time (Section 2) and the time of life in general.

However, value education, developing critical and creative thinking, and reflective practice (discussed in Section 3) place fairly high demands also on the pedagogues who must necessarily direct their self-discipline in a similar spirit. Focusing on leisure pedagogues, there are many whose practical aims are especially developing the methods and organisational forms of educational agency within leisure activities. Few of them, however, deal with reflecting on the contemporary situation with an emphasis on the developing post-adolescent lifestyle. In practice, this means a broad offer of leisure activities, which need not necessarily mean an education corresponding to the goals described above (Section 3).

Constituting and strengthening internal motivation and reinforcing resistance to external stimuli cannot be mediated by information transfer from another person (in this case a teacher or a hobby group leader). It occurs based on an internal processing of external stimuli, experiences, emotions, items of knowledge and of forming the experience, which is then compared with the prior cognition in a process of reflection and self-reflection. The primary goal of leisure education therefore ought not to be creating a rich offer of activities, or piling up experiences, but learning to think, consider, and reflect. The activities ought to be merely a means to, or a suitable environment for, thinking about oneself and the meaning of one's life, which will be followed by forming a value orientation and an idea of one's future in the context of society and social roles.

But this is an art which needs to be learned and it cannot be learned in any other way but by active practice. Therefore, a pedagogue ought not to focus primarily on planning and realising the programme to be offered. In this context, he ought to think much more about the possibility to develop abilities and master skills, which will enable the child to realise who he is, both in the context of the society and culture to which he belongs and in the context of his whole life. It is therefore important not only to create space for asking questions, considering dilemmas, confronting oneself in different situations, and searching for solutions, but also to take part in the process and assume responsibility for it.

Reflection and learning to reflect thus constitute the pivotal part of the pedagogical process. But some research (Hanková, 2010) indicates that reflection is underappreciated in pedagogical practice and insufficiently applied in planning. The causes are of two kinds: either the pedagogues are not aware of the importance of reflection for education, or they have not developed the skill themselves (Hanková, 2010).

It must be noted that no education leading up to accepting responsibility for one's adulthood can be separated into mutually disconnected segments. Here, I am especially thinking of formal and informal education, which are sometimes considered separately, although there can only be one education, as there is only one life. But formal education is closely linked to the school environment and, as research (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013) implies, this environment is frequently perceived as unfree. It is not true to say that there is no space for freely expressing one's thoughts with a subsequent discussion in formal education; but there is certainly more of it in the education which takes place in leisure time. And, taking into account theories presented by some contemporary authors, for example Gray (2009) or Lancy (2016), who assume that children educate themselves by discovering, playing, observing and listening to others, leisure time offers precisely this potential.

The processes taking place in leisure time, which has the essence of freedom, can be directed, or co-directed, by the participants, based on their own decisions. And while I do not wish to claim that this is not possible and does not take place in formal education, it certainly does not take place to such an extent as it does in leisure time. Thus, in leisure time, self-control can prevail over control, and one can discover it and learn from errors, since the processes taking place in leisure time need not be primarily focused

on results reached in a pre-determined time. The child can become fully immersed in the process, explore different variants of solution, experiment and even intentionally take a path that he knows does not lead to the goal merely in order to gain such an experience, or to verify a theoretical piece of knowledge that has been mediated to him. He can decide and take on responsibility for his decisions to an extent corresponding to his present level of development and, in that way, prepare for taking on responsibility for his adult life.

Free time, therefore, integrates several important factors that appear to be crucial in preventing the appearance of the kidult lifestyle (Section 4): personal experience that is essential to forming an individual's personality; decision-making on the basis of criteria, i.e., the formation of value orientation and the development of critical thinking; emotional engagement resulting from subjective significance; and reflection helping to uncover meaning.

Despite the great potential that leisure education has in preventing the kidult lifestyle, it cannot be overestimated, especially for two reasons. The first is the freedom of man, who is ultimately the one who chooses the direction of his life, whether in harmony or inconsistency with the educational effect. In the context of kidult, it can be a conscious decision not to grow to adulthood. However, this risk is always present in prevention and cannot be completely eliminated. But it can be assumed there would be only a few individuals, and not a major part of the population. If not, we would have to be sceptical about education itself.

The second reason is the complexity of personality and social phenomena, and culture. Their formation and transformations must be viewed from a much wider context than leisure education. In other words, the formation activities in leisure time and through leisure time is not the only factor that contributes to the appearance of kidult, or post-adolescent society. We can find more influences that can interact complementarily, competitively or even completely contradictorily. An example may be the impact of the consumer industry (Section 1) and infantilisation (Section 2), with a pseudo-value offer, compared to value education (Section 4).

However, if free time reflects the values of a given culture (Kelly, 2012), then the kidult way of spending it is a reflection of the values of the post-adolescent culture. At the same time, if leisure time is part of the culture,

then the opposite is true: leisure time influences the culture. If leisure time is not a fixed category, but changes in its concept (Kelly, 2012), this change is also reflected in culture. Therefore, there is hope that if leisure education fulfils its goals (Section 3), it can contribute through free time to eliminating the further development of the kidult lifestyle, or the whole post-adolescent society.

6 Conclusion

The post-adolescent lifestyle primarily concerns developed Western countries. However, focusing on leisure education in these countries reveals that it is not developed and applied in any significant way. For example, “in the USA in the past the topic of education for leisure time was an important part of the discourse concerning the conception of education, at present this aspect is not of significant importance in the documents of American education policy.” (Bauman, 2017, p. 97–104). The situation is similar in Germany, where in the 20th century the field of leisure education developed, but after a period of debates concerning the pedagogisation of the time of freedom the educational focus is now disappearing (at present the field is primarily concerned with the pedagogical investigation of leisure time) (Kaplánek, 2010).

The situation in the Czech Republic is somewhat different. Leisure education comprises not only education in leisure time, but also education for leisure time and education by leisure time. This education can be said to have three dimensions: one is the education itself, making provision for the specific conditions arising from the individual’s relatively free decision-making in this temporal segment of his life; the second one is leisure time, whose worthy use depends on motivation and developed competencies; the third is educational means (Bauman, 2017).

“In this conception, leisure time crosses the borders of the educational environment and is much more likely to become a part of the curriculum (for example, cultivating the ability ‘to manage one’s time’ as part of primary education)” (Kaplánek, 2010, p. 18). “Thereby the notional borders not only between school and extra-school pedagogy, but also between formal and informal education, are in fact being crossed” (Hofbauer, 2004, p. 17).

On the other hand, one must keep in mind that leisure time is a time of freedom and, if it is over-pedagogised, it becomes similar to the time of obligation. Reflecting on leisure time and leisure education in the context of preventing the appearance of kidult lifestyle, its prevention consists precisely in freedom. It is not a freedom from obligations, but a freedom allowing for the formation of a value foundation, following personal experience and in the context of a group. It is a freedom in which the child can confront theoretical knowledge with life practice, which constitutes an important part of learning in which formal and informal education become interconnected. It is a freedom which exposes the human being to the need to reflect and decide and provides space for experiencing the consequences of one's decisions, whether they concern only the given individual or a whole group. In this way, the individual learns to think in a broader context (both social and temporal) and to take on responsibility for his decisions. He can also try out different roles and gain a clearer idea of what they involve; in this way, the unknown becomes familiar and the associated anxiety or fear is eliminated. He can even experience the so-called paradox of freedom, when, based on his own free decision, he limits his freedom, either because it will bring profit to himself, or because he gives preference to the interests of others. In this way, the child learns to handle his freedom in the context of his life, and of society.

As we have seen, while leisure time displays a great potential for formation, it is also threatened by formation, especially when unintentional and spontaneous formation is forcefully replaced by an intentional one. In modern Western society and the prosperity associated with it, it is probably not possible to entirely eliminate the desire for ceaseless entertainment in the absence of demands and obligations. However, it is certainly possible and desirable to direct by means of education, so that a person is able to clearly identify these tendencies, reflect on them and choose solutions which do not give up on the responsibility implied by adulthood. Ultimately, it is a question of directing towards a life in the middle of two extremes, which need not always lie in the geometrical middle (Patočka, 1996).

References

- Arnett, J. J., & Tanner, J. L. (Eds.). (2006). *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century*. Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Barber, B. R. (1984). *Strong democracy: Participatory politics for a new age*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

- Barber, B. R. (2001). The global infantilization: How we become more and more “kidults” without noting loss of freedom in society. *Der Tagesspiegel*, 9 September, Germany (DE).
- Barber, B. R. (2007). *Consumed: How markets corrupt children, infantilise adults and swallow citizens whole*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Bauman, P. (2017). Východiska pedagogiky volného času v perspektivě soudobých edukačních koncepcí. In M. Kaplánek (Ed.), *Volný čas a jeho význam ve výchově* (pp. 97–118). Praha: Portál.
- Buckingham, D. (2008). Introducing identity. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media* (pp. 119–142). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Costea, B., Crump, N., & Holm, J. (2005). Dionysus at work? The ethos of play and the ethos of management. *Culture and Organization*, 2(11), 139–151.
- Crawford, K. (2009). Adult responsibility in insecure times: The post-crash world necessitates a redefinition of adulthood. *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture*, 41, 45–55.
- Čáp, J., & Mareš, J. (2001) *Psychologie pro učitele*. Praha: Portál.
- Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour*. New York: Springer Science + Business Media.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think. A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Boston: D.C. Heath.
- Erikson, H. E. (1998). *The life cycle completed*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Frantz, G. A. (2017). *Consumerism, conformity, and uncritical thinking in America (2000 Third Year Paper)*. Retrieved from <https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/8846775>
- Gray, P. (2008). *Children educate themselves I: Outline of some of the evidence*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/200807/children-educate-themselves-i-outline-some-the-evidence>
- Gray, P. (2009). Play as a foundation for hunter-gatherer social existence. *American Journal of Play*, 1(4), 476–522.
- Hanková, Z. (2010). Dary zážitkové pedagogiky budoucím učitelům. *Gymnos Akademos*, 1(1), 23–28.
- Harris, B., & Harris, A. (2005). *Kidults: Adolescence is permanent*. Retrieved from <http://therebelution.com/blog/2005/09/kidults-part-1-adolescence-is-permanent>
- Hofbauer, B. (2004). *Děti, mládež a volný čas*. Praha: Portál.
- Kaklamanidou, B., & Tally, M. (Eds.). (2014). *The millennials on film and television: Essays on the politics of popular culture*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Kaplánek, M. (2010). Pedagogika volného času – projekt budoucnosti, nebo slepá ulička? *Pedagogika*, 60(1), 12–20.
- Kelly J. R. (2012). *Leisure*. Urbana: Sagamore Publishing LLC.
- Key, E. (1909). *The century of child*. New York: Putnam's.
- Kočerová, M., & Bauman, P. (2013). Rozvoj kritického a tvořivého myšlení v prostoru volného času. In P. Bauman (Ed.), *Kritické a tvořivé myšlení: není to málo? Rozvoj myšlení ve filosofických, teologických, psychologických a pedagogických souvislostech* (pp. 168–185). České Budějovice: Teologická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity, Centrum filozofie pro děti.
- Lancy, D. (2016). Teaching: Natural or cultural? In D. C. Geary & D. B. Berch (Eds.), *Evolutionary perspectives on child development and education* (pp. 33–65). New York: Springer.

- Medel-Anonuevo, C., Ohsaco, T., & Mauch, W. (2001). *Revisiting lifelong learning for the 21st century*. Hamburg: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED469790.pdf>
- Morris, R. (2009). *The fundamentals of product design*. Lausanne: AVA Publishing SA.
- MŠMT. (2013–2017). *Rámcové vzdělávací programy*. Dostupné z <http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/skolskareforma/ramcove-vzdelavaci-programy>
- Nakonečný, M. (1997). *Encyklopedie obecné psychologie*. Praha: Academia.
- Nováčková, J. (2008). *Mýty ve vzdělávání*. Kroměříž: Spirála.
- Neild, M., & Carysforth, C. (2004). *Business*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- Noxon, C. (2006). *Rejuvenile: Kickball, cartoons, cupcakes, and the reinvention of the American grown-up*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Opaschowski, H. W. (1996). *Pädagogik der freien Lebenszeit*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Overman, S. J. (2011). *The protestant ethic and the spirit of sport. How Calvinism and capitalism shaped America's games*. Macon: Mercer University Press.
- Patočka, J. (1996). *Péče o duši I*. Praha: Oikoymenh.
- Pávková, J., Hájek, B., & Hofbauer B. (2002). *Pedagogika volného času*. Praha: Portál.
- Pelcová N. (2013). Hodnotová výchova a výchova k hodnocení. *Pedagogika*, 10(3), 285–300.
- Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (2008). *The psychology of the child*. New York: Basic Books.
- Unesco. (2017). *Role of education*. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/role-of-education>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1989). Concrete human psychology. *Soviet Psychology*, 27(2), 53–77.
- Wedge, M. (2012). *Adulthood in America. Who's spoiling the kids?* Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/suffer-the-children/201207/adulthood-in-america>
- Zbudilová H. (2013). Literatura jako klíč mysl otevírající. In P. Bauman (Ed.), *Kritické a tvořivé myšlení: není to málo? Rozvoj myšlení ve filosofických, teologických, psychologických a pedagogických souvislostech* (pp. 134–154). České Budějovice: TF JU, Centrum filozofie pro děti.

Author

Mgr. Martina Kočerová, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Faculty of Theology, Department of Pedagogy, Kněžská 8, 370 01 České Budějovice, Czech Republic, e-mail: martina.kocerova@tf.jcu.cz

Postpubertální společnost jako výzva pro pedagogiku

Abstrakt: Článek se zabývá fenoménem *kidult* a *postpubertální* společností, spojenou s jevem nazývaným *infantilizace*. Jde o teoretickou studii, jejímž cílem je ukázat na potenciál pedagogiky volného času v prevenci vzniku *kidult*. Článek dochází k závěru, že z pohledu prevence je žádoucí působit na jedince již v dětství, kdy se utváří základ osobnosti. Volný čas pak shledává jako vhodný životní prostor, v němž probíhá for-

mování osobnosti převážně na základě vnitřní motivace, tudíž jde o formování hlubšího a trvalejšího charakteru, oproti formální edukaci (Kočerová & Bauman, 2013). *Kidult, adultescent*, nebo *rejuvenile* – fenomén spojený se vznikem *postpubertální* společnosti. Neochota přijmout sociální roli související s věkem je základní charakteristikou tohoto životního stylu. Rozvíjí se tak *postpubertální* společnost s absencí odpovědných občanů s vyzrálými postoji a ochotou nést břímě rozhodování. V důsledku je tento životní styl neslučitelný s fungující demokracií. Infantilizovaná kultura proniká také do vzdělávání, které nerozvíjí kritické myšlení a odpovědné občanství, ale podporuje individualismus pod nálepkou svobodné volby. Namísto výchovy k myšlení předává hotová fakta a podporuje masmédií uměle vytvářené pseudohodnoty (Barber, 1984, 2001, 2007). *Postpubertální společnost* je výzvou zejména pro pedagogiku, která by měla jít cestou rozvoje kritického a tvořivého myšlení a reflexivní praxe a to nejen v rámci formální, ale zejména neformální výchovy.

Klíčová slova: kidult, postpubertální společnost, životní styl, výchova, pedagogika volného času, volný čas