

Abstract

PhDr. Jiří Pospíšil, Ph.D.

**Theory and background**

Life in contemporary society is characterized by a series of conflicts between the world of inner beliefs and the world of experiences having their impulses in the external world. On the one hand, these conflicts, which to a large extent restrict our free choice and are the cause of many moral dilemmas and sources of frustration, stem to a large extent from the external pressures of performance and production, on the other from our own desire for self-realization and a free life. Values, which can be imagined as enduring inner beliefs about ways of acting or end states of things, represent our inner world in this conflict. However, even values are not constant but are shaped and transformed with varying intensity at different times throughout our lives.

The formation, transformation or re-ordering of values is a continuous and lifelong process, a work of (self-)education influenced above all by the culture of society, philosophy and religion, family, teachers and also other members of society. Thus, the value formation and fixation stimuli can come from different sources. The importance of these sources can vary greatly from person to person and depend on the particular life situation and its experience. In this book, we try to reveal one of the important sources for forming and transforming values: our leisure activities. In this book, devoted to the relationship between values and leisure, we try to find and confirm the interconnectedness of the world of values, which represents our personality, beliefs, attitudes and inner experience, and the world of leisure, which is an external projection of the inner world of values and in interaction shapes and transforms this inner world.

We have introduced the whole book with chapters on values and leisure. Both phenomena have been the source of long-standing investigations in many disciplines. Without claiming to encompass their entire complexity, we have attempted in the two introductory chapters to review the development of knowledge of both phenomena so that further discussion of their interconnection makes the best sense. The crucial third chapter then links the two in pedagogical thinking and seeks to identify their role and interrelationship in the context of social pedagogy and leisure pedagogy. In doing so, it was necessary not only to grasp both phenomena from the perspective of research but also to find ways of linking them through a theoretical framework and interrelationships expressed through an extensive network of hypotheses.

**Methods**

The central research challenge we would like to highlight is the need to find a new way of measuring and categorising leisure activities. We were looking for a way to see if and how the relationships of values to leisure activities could be conceptualised and translated into operationalised variables and hypotheses. By attempting to connect with the world of values, we were confronted with the question of what leisure data we can, in fact, correlate value measures with. We did not find any similar systematic approach to that for values in the area of leisure, although leisure has also been subjected to frequent scrutiny. While systematic examination of values through standardised procedures can make the results of such research at least comparable, in the area of leisure, each researcher or institution followed its own path, and the categorisation of leisure activities was subordinated to the purpose of the particular work. Therefore, the first sub-task set as a condition for further research was

to design a way of classifying leisure activities that would not only allow future comparisons of research results but also, above all, allow for the creation of clusters of activities within categories, thus allowing for the correlation of whole categories, sub-categories and individual values against other variables, such as the results of value measurement. Moreover, the aggregated structure of activities allows for a structural grasp of leisure as a single variable when testing for statistical dependencies. In doing so, sufficient flexibility, backward compatibility and extensibility had to be maintained. The designed and used catalogue of leisure activities fulfilled these parameters, which was demonstrated both by its gradual expansion in the number of activities and by its continuous transformation between versions. In this book, version 4.2.0 from 2022 is presented with transformed results of the previous years. All value correlations are related to it. To test the net of hypotheses the Pearson  $\chi^2$  test of independence in contingency tables was used. Inner dependencies within the contingency tables were interpreted using the adjusted standard residuals (z scores).

## **Results**

In the second part of the book, we looked in more detail at the different categories of leisure activities as distinguished in version 4.2.0 (2022) of the catalogue and their relationships to values. This approach provided readers with two perspectives on these relationships. The first is presented in the final subsection (3.2.8) of Chapter 3 and in Appendix E. This is the perspective of the values. Its main advantage is clarity, but it also indicates which values are or were neutral at some stage of the measurement with respect to leisure. Indeed, these also play a role in a comprehensive view and understanding of the issue. The second point of view is guided by the perspective of leisure time, more precisely, the different categories of activities. It forms the most important part of the book and is covered in Chapters 4–12. In these chapters, the structure of each particular category of leisure activities is examined in detail, as are their socio-demographic and value contexts. Both are then discussed in the final sections of these chapters, assessing the importance of value implications for the category, and elaborating on the pedagogical challenges that arise from these implications.

We are certain we have sufficiently defended the validity of this book's theoretical assumption about the interplay between values and ways of experiencing leisure (activities). However, thanks to the findings, we have also confirmed the assumption that the relationship between values and leisure reflects an image of the value profiles of the interviewees, in many ways more faithful than the image presented at work, school or business, the formation of which is motivated by a number of external causes and, in particular, the fulfilment of the corresponding social roles. As a result, people's self-representation may change and shift during periods of performance orientation, but their leisure time speaks much more convincingly about themselves. Indeed, we are subject to much less pressure to perform in our leisure time than in our work time, although we do not deny that this pressure exists to some extent.

## **Conclusions**

The conclusions we reach and the relationships we have confirmed through research may seem obvious, even banal, to some readers, and while this may be true in many ways, it is undoubtedly reasonable that there is an awareness among readers of the self-evident nature of the relationships between values and leisure. For each of the categories of leisure, we are sure that at least one relationship can be found between a particular value and a type of activity that is not obvious and that causes some surprises and puzzles. It is the discovery of these unexpected dependencies and, above all, the reflection on their use in education and self-education that has motivated extensive research and the writing of this book. We would like to continue our ongoing efforts to map the relationships between values and leisure and to repeat the measurements at regular intervals in the future. We

would also like to extend these measurements to more countries in order to obtain international comparisons. Periodic measurements and internationalisation are therefore a second major challenge and impetus for future research progress.

From the beginning of our efforts, we have built our thesis on several basic premises (Chap. 3, p. 60). We believe that by defending the very thesis of the relationship between leisure and values, we have vindicated these premises as well, or at least accentuated their influence. Therefore, we can *confirm the enduring validity* of Plato's reasoning about leisure as an opportunity. Likewise, we can *recall the relevance* of Aristotle's perception of leisure as a site for building community, *reflect the existence* of a close relationship between values, leisure, and the culture in which both are embedded. We can also *emphasize the need for* subjectively perceived leisure that fulfils basic needs but also creates space for transcendence, and last but not least consider the possibility of *using pedagogical opportunities* in the relationship between leisure and values, so important, especially for social and leisure pedagogues.