

*Predatory and Alternative Hedonism  
– Better Later than Now?  
Predátorský a alternativní hédonismus  
– lepší později než teď?*

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**Abstract**

Hedonistic ethos is to intensify in the environment of consumer culture and in the atmosphere of unlimited consumerism, intentionally supported by market mechanisms. The value patterns of hedonistic life style are defined by experience motivations, excitement, sensual pleasures, delight, self-satisfaction, intensive need for emotional stimulations, present-time orientation or accelerated pace of life. It is considered identical with radical inclination towards individualization life practices, rapidly growing egoism and narcissistic tendencies confirming the meaning of one's own existence. Life philosophy of independence, non-determination and "inner orientation" logically leads to the application of such life strategies that can support and develop this attitude to life. Predatory hedonism focusing on the values of pleasurable experience requires mobility, flexibility and variability; it refuses to accept stability and obligations, i.e. anything that could tie and restrict life movement focusing on the fleeting and shifting world of experiences. It is a life "without ties", unpredictable, unsettled, wild and impulsive. Hedonistic life style oriented towards consumer values, however, meets with frequent social, ecological and ethical criticism. There is room for discussion related to the alternative model of hedonism based on more responsible and well-considered approach towards consumption and voluntary modesty, which shall eventually enhance the sense of personal happiness and general satisfaction with life. Ethical consumption, as part of fulfilling the idea of alternative hedonism, may become an attractive objective of this lifestyle, based on a non-ascetic, but socially and environmentally friendly, way of life. The alternative hedonism is further compared with ideas of economics of productive consumption and with development of financial market.

**Keywords**

alternative hedonism, consumer culture, deferred pleasure, predatory hedonism, life satisfaction

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**Abstrakt**

Hédonistický étos má intenzivně zesilovat v prostředí spotřební kultury a atmosféry neomezeného konzumentství, programově podporovaného tržními mechanismy. Hodnotové vzorce hédonistického životního stylu jsou typicky definovány zážitkovými motivacemi, vzrušením, smyslovými požitky, rozkoší, sebeuspokojováním, intenzivní

potřebou emočních stimulací, orientací na přítomnost či zrychleným životním tempem. Je ztotožňován s radikálním příklonem k individualizačním životním praktikám, hypertrofujícím egoismem a narcistními sklony potvrzujícími smysl vlastní existence. Životní filozofie nezávislosti a vnitřní orientace logicky vede k aplikaci takových životních strategií, které takové postoje k životu podporují a rozvíjejí. Predátorský hédonismus zaměřený na hodnoty smyslových potěšení a rozkoší vyžaduje mobilitu, flexibilitu a variabilitu; odmítá přijmout stabilitu a závazky, tj. cokoli, co by mohlo spoutat a omezit životní pohyb se zaměřením na prchavý a proměnlivý svět zkušeností. Je to život „bez pout“, nepředvídatelný, neklidný, divoký a impulzivní. Hédonistický životní styl orientovaný na konzumní hodnoty ovšem naráží na četnou sociální, ekologickou a etickou kritiku. Otevírá se zde prostor k diskusím alternativního modelu hédonismu, založeném na zodpovědnějších a rozváznějších přístupech ke spotřebě a dobrovolné skromnosti, což má v důsledcích zvyšovat i pocit osobního štěstí a životní spokojenosti lidí. Etická spotřeba se v rámci naplňování idejí alternativního hédonismu může stát atraktivní součástí životního stylu, založeného na neasketickém, ale sociálně a ekologicky šetrném životním způsobu.

### **Klíčová slova**

alternativní hédonismus, spotřebitelská kultura, odložená spotřeba, predátorský hédonismus, životní uspokojení

## **1 Introduction**

Different strategies contributing to the growth in demand and to creation of new markets gradually developed as part of the consumer culture. The ability to participate in consumer culture also becomes a significant indicator of personal success, prestige and appreciation (Zahrádka 2014, p. 10–11). Personal efforts and aspiration thus lead to competitive acquisition of consumption goods used as the values of social comparison as well as the confirmation of one's own social status and life situation. This naturally affects the strategies of life style, which are more present-time oriented, the unwillingness to economize and to postpone the consumption for the future. On the other hand, the consumers are socialized to be willing to accept and to adopt fashion trends, to search for new consumer targets and to wander from one experience to another. The formation of new markets and the initiation of customer demand stress more the need for saturation of different individual desires, usually anchored in an emotional world of subjectively formulated objectives and authentic wishes. In this context, Schulze depicts the consumer culture as an ideal environment cultivating and strengthening the attitude of people to non-material values of experiences (Schulze 2000). According to Schulze, the focus of people on the experience becomes a significant determinant of search, formulation and implementation of a life project, as part of which the satisfaction of emotional needs, initiation of exciting feelings and induction of states of bliss play a key role. In order to meet these needs, it is more popular to apply hedonistic life approaches systematically supported and confirmed by interventions of globally functioning marketing activities. The emotional marketing of experiences is being developed, through media representing experiences as values that bear no delay and whose attractiveness, intensity and uniqueness can be preserved only through action, fast decision and determination not to postpone anything (Lipovetsky

2007). Consumers turn into “experience collectors”, persistent adventurers wandering the marketing-marked paths of sensuality and aesthetic experience, aiming to hedonistically intensify present moments by shifting fleeting attention and only temporary interest in one experience to another. Prioritization of the experience as the central value leads to “everydayness improvement” and to radical withdrawal of meaningful rational conduct in favour of experience rationality. The nature of everydayness improvement lies in the ideal of “beautiful life” which is based on constant search for new experiences. “*The motto of the day is: Make the most out of your life*”. (Keller 2012, p. 88.)

In the related context, our first and main objective is to specify the important features and manifestations of hedonistic lifestyle which is described as *predatory*. This description is used to identify a specific model of hedonism developed in conditions of consumer culture, the coordinates of which present hedonistic life attitudes similar to the models of brisk and predatory rapaciousness and predatory style of thinking. At the same time, we will try to show how predatory characteristics of hedonism manifest themselves and to indicate its ambivalent displays. We further try to point out possible factors of self-destructive potential of predatory hedonism through liberal criticism and to offer an alternative model of hedonistic lifestyle, from which the consumers should discover more authentic and stable feelings of life joy and happiness. The alternative model of hedonism is to represent a generally more considerate and economical life style which takes into account ecological, social and ethical values, simultaneously respecting the needs of consumers as well. Alternative hedonism is not thus perceived as an attempt to promote ascetic life style but as an attractive, less economically and time-consuming life style where non-material as well as material values play the key role, however these values are achieved through a more considerate type of consumption. One of possible factors of alternative hedonism respecting the more considerate and rational approach towards the consumption may even be the ability and willingness to postpone joys and pleasures for the future. Such induced situation may bring more life pleasure and joy than approaches preferring immediate gratification. Where it is possible, we show connection between the concept of predatory and alternative hedonism on the one hand and the concept productive consumption and development of financial market on the other hand. The connection is only intimated in accordance with the first aim, but it can be seen as a perspective field of scientific research.

## 2 Life as “experience project” and hedonistic cult of the moment

In a society, where marketing industry as a significant media body substantially supports and promotes pleasurable experience instead of the most valuable attributes of life, hedonism gains ground as an essential attribute of commercialized life style. Schulze’s concept of life as the “experience project” is thus fulfilled in a hedonistic view of life accompanied by extraordinary desire to live life to the fullest, to constantly search for new emotional stimuli and pleasures, to maximize private welfare and to reveal the secrets of all new pleasurable experiences. It is based on fleeting appetite of different experiences that need to be changed as fast as possible, without hesitation, unnecessary delays and

postponement. The choice for entertainment is less stable and more impulsive; it bears no delay since the objects of experiences themselves quickly change in the explosion of practically unlimited offer of new opportunities. Moreover, experiences are difficult to be “consumed” in parts, whereas a certain part cannot be saved for “a rainy day”. Consumers are “trained” by marketing to worship the “cult of immediate satisfaction” with one rule “now or never” (Roubal 2014, p. 88). “The training” is supported by financial markets offering loans and other possibility for people without enough money. Under certain circumstances, consumers turn into *predators* that respond immediately and quickly chase after the prey promising unique emotional excitement and authentic experiences.

Orientation to experiences becomes the central motive of life, dominant value and aim in life that is no object of choice but necessity. The society intensively focusing on values identified with the emotionality of pleasurable experiences, initiation of delights and spiritual bliss will more likely support life cycle strategies corresponding to hedonistic mentality preferring instant gains and conduct models that are connected with term instant gratification in economic theory (Loewenstein 1992). Experiences become mainly the object of momentaneous consumption, present moment, object of acute action and are only with difficulties and reluctance postponed until a later time. Predators act immediately since any hesitation or postponement may jeopardise not only the goal achievement but also shorten the time given for fast and fleeting change of other experiences generated by wide choice of opportunities of emotional marketing. The orientation of life style to the *instant gratification* is distinctly and quite intensively supported by the interventions of marketing actions that stress the trend of immediate and easy availability. Marketing themes usually initiate active and fast action, they refer to life “without limits”, suggest life in a world of unlimited possibilities and endless adventures. It is quite difficult to imagine a commercial marketing message advising the consumer to be contained, careful, to postpone decisions and to be modest and restrained. Present consumption and immediate satisfaction are understood as main aim of human behaviour. Interestingly, mainstream economic theory often offers similar view as it sees a man as “a utility maximizer” without further feature (for details see e.g. Kirchgässner, 2010). However, such view is criticized (e.g. Valenčík and Wawrosz 2019) as it neglects important aspects of human being and it does not take in account that our consumption is always affected by past experience and a man always decides between present and future consumption when present decision can have long run effects.

Bauman pays attention to the specific significance of phenomenon instant gratification which is no longer the aim of social actors only but it also concerns completely impersonal and trans-personal institutionalized structures (Bauman 2010, p. 15–17). The promotion and enforcement of the cult of immediate consumption are quite evident in the whole complex of marketing industry, the main task of which is to monitor the increase in economic profits of firms that offer various goods and services. The sellers try to achieve that the consumers spend the least time on activities of consumption and purchase; the time spent on consumption should be reduced to the minimum. Mottoes such as “With no effort”; “Easy and fast”; “Quick pleasure”; “Immediate result”; “One-touch application” are to explicitly inform the costumers that they will save time, however, it is implicitly monitored if this saved time is turned into market profits in return since this time shall be used for other purchases (Roubal 2014, p. 187). The objective of manufactures and sellers

of goods and services is to make the customers spend less time with the products they have just purchased and to make them quickly return for other purchases and search for other alternatives of consumption. According to Bauman, this strategy is effective because the customers themselves call for fast effects; they desire quick results and usually prefer only temporary activation of their mental and physical skills during the consumption in order to have enough energy and time to accomplish other shopping goals. Marketing enforcement of hedonistic cult of the moment is thus used to spare the customers' time, ironically only to put it back on the altar of quick time in the chase for other shopping escapades.

This whole process, however, is likely to show ambivalent nature. On the one hand, consumers chasing after various adventurous experiences are rewarded with certain delights and excitement; they may come across new impulses and sources of pleasure and the unwelcome fossilization of everydayness is actually prevented by their own consumer greed for experiences. They will not allow the initial attractiveness of pleasurable feelings to simply turn into commonplace and boring comfort. They search for new challenges, discover new things, refuse routine and like players they start to play new games with a view to having a good time with the game and its outcome. They enjoy the game as well as the results they achieve during the game.

On the other hand, however, the methods of hedonists – predators constantly searching for new and more exciting preys represented by experiences, obviously did not induce more stable and permanent feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. The problem is that every particular decision and every choice from the wide offer of opportunities must evoke doubt as to whether other choices and decisions might not induce more irresistible experiences after all. The bigger the choice of different experiences is, the more intensive feelings of insecurity are induced by the next decision (Schwartz et al. 2002). In order to eliminate the unpleasant feelings of insecurity and fear that each specific decision made within the choice of possible experiences may have deprived the consumers of other more attractive and tempting aims offering irresistible feelings of pleasure, the collectors of experiences try to switch as fast as possible a large amount of different pleasurable experiences. They run back and forth between experiences, trying to absorb as much as possible within the shortest possible time to have enough time to “taste” other temptations. This naturally leads to the inflation of experiences where the effort to accumulate most of the experiences within the shortest periods of time also results in superficiality. Besides the feelings of insecurity, feelings of disappointment set in as well. The obsession with constant change and variation of experience objects, fast sequence of changing experiences cannot erase fancies and visions of other more attractive and still untested temptations that keep escaping and need to be pursued till complete exhaustion; moreover, the principle of constant innovations and the stream of exciting novelties turn into commonplace routine – becoming the cycle of everydayness. From the economic point of view, predatory hedonism can be seen as a source of economic and financial instability as for instance financial crisis after year 2007: if a man borrows money to satisfy the needs induce by marketing action, it often does not assess its ability to pay its debt. Financial organizations support its impatience, offer him/her loans without proper investigation its financial situation. Employees of the organization are or were often evaluated by amount of loans and immediate profit. However, if the conditions

change and many people become not to be able to their debts, many problems occur – both for debtors and their creditor and whole economy (for details see e.g. Stroukal 2019).

The value-based type of predatory hedonism and its motivational goals are characterized by a strong relationship to material values, seeking quick and successful professional career, guaranteeing – if possible – high income, prestige and power. They are therefore willing to sacrifice their free time, as well as reduce the efforts and time of family and partner relationships that are restrictive to the realization of their own life scenarios where there is not too much space for empathy and reciprocity. Conversely, dominating is loneliness and the efforts to satisfy one's egoistically-narcissistic needs and selfish interests that are clearly contrary to tolerance and understanding, caring about the environment, as well as self-discipline and respect for social rules.

Predatory hedonism is in line with patterns of behaviour, typically focusing on present, accelerated pace of life, and fleetingly shifting attention and interest from experience to experience, based on the rule *"now or never"*. Experiences are mostly a matter of momentary consumption, the current moment, the subject of an acute action, and they are postponed for later only with difficulty and reluctance. Not only do they accept but actively seek fast pace of life, consumer opportunities and conspicuous consumption. *"Narcissist personalities of today's people remain immature, bound to 'hyper-narcissism' and 'hyper-consumerism'; moreover, 'hyper-consumerism' now involves all aspects of social life, exploiting the principles of human spirituality and emotional pleasures"* (Radošinská 2017, p. 13). 'Their typically high level of commitment, desire for success, career and guaranteed earnings, completely leaves out the ascetic dimension to the treatment of profit, which transformed in the atmosphere of emotional consumerism experiential economy in a series of hedonistic adventures, debauchery and eventually indebtedness. It is worth noting that the basic features of predatory hedonism are known in economic theory long time ago. E.g. J. Galbraith in his *Affluent Society* (1958) actually warns against this approach.

In this context, we can mention the concept of self-illusory hedonism, which is based on an uncontrollable desire for all things new and on intense and imaginative dreaming and fantasizing about changes, which forms the core content of life in this perspective (Campbell 1987). A hedonist is constantly unhappy, he does not accept the way he lives, but dreams of how he could live, worrying about all that he is lacking in life and the life pleasures that elude him. There is no doubt that the contemporary consumer societies with increasing welfare and rising living standards further reinforce these fantasies in the real and imaginary world of consumption and open up new mental spaces for vivid images of a more attractive life surrounded by infinite possibilities of living a life of pleasure.

Campbell compares modern hedonism to the Romantic era, when dreams and fantasies were a significant personal quality, reflecting a man's desire for a non-alienated and authentic life. The difference, however, is that hedonistic dreaming is filled with the desires of consumer goods, it being more important to want the goods rather than own them. Hedonistic dreaming is permanent and unstoppable, desires and fantasies are endless, since reconciliation and satisfaction with what a hedonist has would mean adapting to the world and abandoning the project of "non-alienated life". In this concept, it is more

important to want than to have. Once a dreamy hedonist obtains what he desired, the subject of his desire becomes useless for him. He quickly reorients his desires and attention to other goods representing something new. Thus, the ownership of objects does not bring more peace and satisfaction to consumers' minds, but instead creates a state of constant dissatisfaction, leading to an obsessive pursuit of and search for new and seemingly indispensable products and services.

Predatory hedonism transforms a man into pleasure seeker, spinning the wheel of entertainment increasingly fast, furiously skipping from experience to experience, only to find out that an ever-increasing consumption of experience makes the appetite for excitation grow even more. The hunger for the experiences remains, only the appetite is more promiscuous. The question then remains how to limit many disappointments and frustrations where experience should bring more joy and pleasure, how to reduce anxiety and insecurity where an almost unlimited choice of experiences should, on the contrary, bring about feelings of authenticity and unlimited individual freedom.

One of the possible ways out of this situation is ethically focused consumption, which includes a certain restraint, self-discipline, willingness to postpone consumption, to reduce or significantly minimize it (e.g. skipping / garbage picking / dumpster diving). However, an ethically oriented consumer does not agree with the principles of predatory/self-illusory hedonism, but tends towards its alternative, more creative, voluntarily modest and rationalized form.

### 3 From predatory hedonism to its alternative model

The hedonistic model described as *predatory* is the object of frequent social criticism (Sassatelli 2009). British philosopher Soper presents a rather untraditional criticism revealing self-destructing potential hidden in practising the unbound hedonism containing many often unrecognised self-destructing elements that need to be reflected and eliminated for our own good (Soper 2012). Soper's criticism questions consumerism-based hedonism not only in terms of problematic ethical, environmental and social effects, but mainly in terms of the negative impact on the actors themselves. In the end, the predatory model of hedonism is to soften sensual pleasures and to divert attention from more spiritual forms of good life. Hedonistically-oriented life style is to restrict human abilities to experience spontaneous moments of joy and to lead to total sensual numbness (Veenhoven 2003). On the other hand, fast-food life style eliminates what becomes the object of growing interest, such as more free time, more personal contacts and a slower-paced life. According to Soper, modern forms of consumerism represented by predatory hedonism principally follow the ideas of growth economy as a system operating effectively provided that people are willing to spend their money. However, the problem is that if consumers should increase the number of their purchases, they would have to intensify their work-load, i.e. to spend more time at work thus limiting their free time for themselves and the family.

This forces people to purchase larger amount of goods and services, which compensates the lack of free time they are deprived of while trying to earn financial means necessary

to support and to implement the consumer life style (Soper – Fafejta 2014). This consumption dynamic is to restrict more available and financially far less demanding forms of satisfaction which are ruthlessly replaced with more expensive compensations in the form of consumer goods and services. For instance, travel and vacation industry generates products promising to get back at least some of the time spend on work duties. The similar concept can be seen in the popular web of city fitness centres resembling artificial impersonal industrial halls where people intensively focus on their bodies in concentrated training sessions. This may also involve a compensation for the lack of free time that could be invested in slower less stressful and quieter movement in nature.

The progressing model of consumption culture prosperity is more and more based on collective willingness and readiness to spend money and reluctance to save, to live in the mode of voluntary modesty and to postpone pleasures and joys for the future. At the same time it assumes that people will work harder and more intensively and sacrifice more time for financial income subsequently invested in products compensating and replacing those properties and values which people give up in favour of time-consuming work.

## 4 Alternative hedonism

In terms of contemporary consumption culture, the criterion for the evaluation of goods and services is not only their economic parameters and possibilities of practical use, but also their moral dimension (Grauel 2014). The purchase of products does not have to be a process necessarily based solely on economic considerations of utility or quality, but also on non-material motivation with a symbolic meaning. However, similar motivation based on value-based behaviour may be viewed as irrational in terms of the principles of economic behaviour and the laws of supply and demand (Nový 2015). In this context, the literature contains concepts such as “smart shopping”, “socially responsible consumption”, “voluntary modesty” or, last but not least, “shared economy”, which are terms summarizing the concept of the “political consumer” characterized by a certain degree of civic engagement (Micheletti – Follesdal – Stolle 2006). In various sociological, economic, anthropological or psychological areas of research, there is a growing interest in addressing questions of symbolic importance of consumption in the process of shaping social roles and identity (Newholm – Shaw 2007), non-material shopping motives as a source of self-reflection, trends and focus of active ethical consumption, or, conversely, increasing signs of anti-consumerism and a wave of boycotts of and protests against various types of products (Cherrier 2009).

In this context, Soper presented the model of alternative hedonism as a variation of sustainable life style that is environmentally friendly as well as considerate of physical and mental health, taking into account the needs of privacy and family life (Soper – Fafejta 2014). This alternative hedonism model is based on the assumption that the predatory consumption hedonism fails to evoke feelings of happiness and satisfaction, but rather personal disappointment, inner tension, emotional emptiness and permanent insecurity. It points out necessary restrictions of the consumer life style that does not bring more but fewer sensual pleasures and joys. The concept of alternative hedonism is not puritan

and does not follow the ideas of renunciation and asceticism. To the contrary – it offers more attractive strategies to achieve peace, welfare and sensual pleasures. The source of these pleasures and joys should not be searched for in the objective knowledge of “real” or “true” needs, i.e. in the visions of what values the consumers should try to achieve or what properties they should desire. It is necessary to focus on our own skills of self-reflection, experience and self-critical discovery of negative impacts of consumerism on our own life as well as on the surrounding world for which an alternative hedonist should be able to assume responsibility. We abandon here the idea of “unrecognised” and commercially generated “artificial” needs manipulating the desires of consumers. The stress is put on authenticity, self-control and the potential of free will of consumers who are able to continuously reflect and independently evaluate their own life situation determined by the consumer culture and consumerism. Self-reflective skills of consumers should identify negative aspects of consumption-based hedonist methods offering satisfaction instead of ecstasy and preferring resignation to transcendence. This should also show the consumers a way to “more spiritual” interests and overall more profound and intensive experiences (Honoré 2004). With the reference to Adorno, we live in a society where “everybody lives on a plane”, but they obey the commandment “thou shall not fly” (Adorno 1967). It shows that the main sources of personal happiness include values that exist beyond “shopping zones” and cannot be simply bought as a product or service. They mainly represent family values, friendly social relations, a meaningful job and free time (Durning 1992). Alternative hedonism focuses on acquiring abstract qualities, such as time, attention, space, peace, nature and safety that are to represent new forms of luxury and comfortable life. The possibility to enjoy our free time and to be allowed to decide about our time is one of the most desirable values. Enough free time is to represent one of the most luxurious factors and a significant determinant of a happy life. It relates to the concept that alternative hedonism rejects constitutive parameters and qualities of predatory hedonism, e.g. the before-mentioned “cult of immediate satisfaction”, which has to obey the rhythm of quick time. Alternative hedonism as specific life strategy of high-quality, fulfilled and happy life disapproves stressful haste, urgency, rapid and quick changes of different life moments, desire for quick results and temporary emotional excitement and rather focuses on a slower-paced life that offers free moments allowing to enjoy peaceful joys of ordinary life situations. While the feature of predatory hedonism is the afore-mentioned “cult of immediate satisfaction”, the constitutive feature of alternative hedonism might be the “cult of deferred pleasure”.

Alternative hedonism raises specific demand in different areas of consumption of products and services, thus shaping the overall character of the moralization of markets. Movements, such as Slow Movement, associating and implementing projects such as Slow Food, Slow Travel, Slow Cities, Slow Schools, Slow Books, Slow Living, etc. are civic initiatives motivated by the adoption of some principles of alternative hedonism and shared values of ethical consumption, a creative approach to life, trying to slow down the pace of life in different spheres of life, avoiding hurried existence, instant forms of being and seeking a more meaningful and better life in a peaceful environment allowing to develop social relationships and stronger interpersonal relationships (Humphrey 2013). Others point to the need to change lifestyle in terms of slowing down or reducing consumption, and often suggest original alternatives. For example, a model of so-called connected consumption is emerging as a new form of life practice, limiting waste and excessive consumption. This

model is based on the willingness to share different material goods with people around (car, clothing, garden equipment, etc.), thereby limiting the purchases of new goods and overall contributing to a more frugal and modest lifestyle (Schor 2013). There is also a rise in quasi-social movement promoting activities such as Slow Food or Slow Travel (Lindholm – Lie 2013). Elsewhere, we see how good it is for the quality of life to move away from hectic car transport to slower, smoother and healthier cycling, which is especially true for large cities (Ryle – Soper 2013). It is not just that the “speed culture” seems to be an unsustainable system in terms of ecological demands and economic possibilities, but it also makes sense in terms of everyday experiences of individual actors actively seeking more attractive and meaningful forms of life.

From our point of view the concept of alternative hedonism could be connected and/or compared with concept productive consumption (see e.g. Valenčík and Wawrosz 2019) emphasizing that consumption does not satisfy only immediate needs but can also have longitudinal effects including increasing future income. Typical examples of productive consumption are spa services that help a man to protect its health and so to keep and to develop ability to earn money. We would like to emphasize that alternative hedonism need not be connected only with restriction of consumption. A much more meaningful way is to find functional consumption – it means consumption that develops human ability and skills, that sees a man as a complex being not satisfying only present needs but looking for balance between present and future based on previous experiences. Part of functional consumption is also patient and looking forward to future consumption. Looking forward to itself brings satisfaction and pleasant feelings. Productive consumption can be supported by financial markets in the form of “transferred price” (e.g. Heissler, Valenčík and Wawrosz 2010) when a debtor borrows many for development and keeping its skills and it pays to a creditor some part of its future income obtaining due to using the skills.

## 5 Better later than now?

In the context of developed ethos of predatory hedonism and the related “cult of immediate satisfaction”, we often and in vain search for more distinct and frequent displays of what many economists describe as “anticipated gain”, sociologists or anthropologists as “deferred pleasure”. Generally speaking, the anticipated gain results from a situation where you look forward to possible future pleasurable experience (De La Fabián Rodrigo – Stecher 2018). It refers to a situation where immediate consumption of a product gives way to deferred consumption. Some products may evoke such powerful feelings of “looking-forward-to” that the preference of deferred consumption to immediate consumption appears to be subjectively more beneficial from psychological perspective (Loewenstein – Prelec 1993). Subjective feelings of joy, pleasure and bliss need not result from hasty and immediate consumption but also from deferred pleasure. Deferred pleasure belongs to the category of human activities that can be practised only in slow time. To postpone something means to wait, not to rush and to wait for the right moment that shall bring the expected gain. Lottery ticket agents may not profit from the fact that betters would spend a lot of money on tickets because they would naively believe to win the main prize, where the statistical chance of such a win equals almost zero. These companies might economically profit only

because the betters buy a chance to win, though this chance is extremely small. And the visions of such lottery winnings may evoke most intensive feelings of pleasure and the looking-forward-to process related to the possible winnings becomes the only reward in most cases. Certain disappointments experienced in these lotteries need not result from the fact that the ticket was not the winning ticket but from the fact that the better can no longer enjoy the time and situation filling him with pleasurable feelings of possible win.

A number of travel agencies offers the so-called "last minute travels". It is a situation depicting life motives in quick time conditions, involving quick decision, fast and short preparation and hasty urgent implementation. Customers, who often use this bargain, do not usually have enough time for proper preparations, but they also lack time that could be used as the looking-forward-to-holiday phase. It is the enjoyment prior to the holiday and pleasurable dreaming about what the holiday might bring that might be the best thing about the whole holiday. This might be the reason why many travel agencies have offered the so-called "first minute travel", the contrary to the "last minute travel" in recent years. The customer thus purchases the holiday as well as enough time to look forward to the holiday.

The fact that many luxurious trademarks introduce waiting lists pursues at least two goals. First, it enhances the prestige guaranteed for the buyers by the identity symbols that have to be waited for. The customer experiences a situation that is intentionally and calculatedly forced out by the complex of marketing communication in the culture of instant gratification in the interest of economic subjects. Ironically, the customer is deprived of the possibility to acquire something immediately – which is otherwise a standard usually provided to the general public of less wealthy consumers. It is the situation of waiting and postponing the access to the goods that demonstrates certain characteristics that this situation requires a certain sacrifice from the customer. These sacrifices in the modern consumption-based society might be the most tormenting. However, if the customer makes "this sacrifice" in order to obtain something, the product on the waiting list gains in value for him and most likely for the others as well. Second, the introduction of the waiting list also makes sense because the customers may look forward to the product they are going to purchase. It does not take into account the gain from the value he intends to get. The same pleasure and joy might be brought by looking forward to a luxurious watch that cannot be purchased unless you are on a long waiting list with other buyers... as if they were waiting for a cheaper holiday. From the economic point of view, we add that creating a waiting list can increase a status of an item and a person buying it. Consumption of such goods can be seen as conspicuous and it indicates that the consumer achieved better position comparison to no-consumers. Creating artificial waiting list has nothing common with reasonable postponing of present consumption or with the phenomenon "looking forward to" future consumption.

## 6 Conclusion

Against the backdrop of post-modern hedonistic values of unrestrained and unscrupulous consumerism, we can see the emergence of an alternative form of voluntarily modest

hedonism with highly ethical thinking and conduct. Alternative hedonism prefers ways of creative rationalization of shopping and consumption, self-discipline, and restraint, while preserving the non-ascetic model of life. An alternative hedonist expects that self-restraint and application of certain principles of life minimalism in consumption will bring positive feelings of meaningfulness of such behaviour and the enjoyment of life. Alternative hedonism and the attractiveness of Epicureanism has a great potential for further development of ethical consumption and the global development of moralized markets. One of the main attributes of alternative hedonism is deferred gains.

Preference of deferred gains means return, though only temporary, to the conditions of slow time, i.e. a situation we might be less familiar with and are not well aware of in this time of modern communication technologies and information influx. The strategy of deferred pleasure does not support the arrival of quick time; this strategy of acquiring psychological gain is driven away by commercial marketing communication, systematically maintaining and enhancing the consumer appetite and greed for knowing new sources of entertainment and pleasure. Enforcing the principles of deferred pleasure is not in the interest of impersonal institutionalized structures forming consumers' spirit and commercializing everydayness, but it might be in the interest of social actors themselves in order to slow down the axes of entertainment hustle and bustle and the pace of hasty running back and forth from one experience to another with the expectation that more experiences and more frequent emotional adventures might also bring more pleasure and joy.

As a perspective field of scientific research can be further seen comparison the principle of alternative hedonism with theory of productive consumption showing that at least some parts of consumption also affect future income and utility. Alternative hedonism should not orientate only on consumption restriction but on looking such consumption developing human personality, skills and ability and creating space for development of each person. Present technological stage allows to achieve such progress. Financial markets also can offer tools how to support long run effects of consumption oriented on human development. The logical question is thus why we meet so often with predatory hedonism. Short answer indicates connection with conspicuous consumption (e.g. Veblen 1999), position investments (e.g. Heissler, Valenčík and Wawrosz 2010) and other forms undesirable behaviour. Many of them were many times analysed but their connection with predatory hedonism including the issue what to do to reduce such undesirable behaviour must be still solved.

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