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Identity Crisis as Impetus to Acquire and Develop New Identity

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Abstract

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The problem under consideration is identity crisis and the ways of overcoming it. Now then the world is deep in economic, political, social, cultural and ethical troubles, the topical issue is the core values of an individual and the ways of their developing in the right way. It can be possible if everyone understands the need not only to identify oneself in the modern world, but also to acquire and develop new identity. Having studied the issue we understand that researchers interpret the concept *identity* differently since it concerns people's consciousness, which is not a clearly seen material substance. A person's identity is being constantly influenced by external and internal things, which sooner or later lead to identity crisis. But this crisis may become a mechanism to develop new identity, which is impossible without preserving traditional core values. If we better understand this phenomenon, we will be able to create a more harmonious society.

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1. Introduction

The problem of identity draws attention of many researchers, but, despite a significant amount of scientific publications, it is probably early to say that this phenomenon has already been thoroughly and completely studied. The short analysis of conceptual approaches shows that researchers have been increasingly interested in this debatable subject and the fact that there is no common classification of identity types proves that the problem is complex and versatile.

2. The concept of identity in scholarly works

In different contexts, often with different meanings, the concept of identity is used in anthropology, pedagogics, psychology, sociology, philosophy. There are different types of identity offered by scholars: negative and positive identity (Erikson, 1996); ascriptive, cultural, territorial, political, economic, social identity; social, personal, I-identity; conscious and unconscious identity; real, ideal, negative, producing identity; individual and collective identity (Hösle, 1994); "postmodern identity". Most authors G. Breakwell, H. Tazewell, J. Habermas, etc. consider personal and social aspects of identity to be the basic ones. Thus, being interpreted in different ways the concept "identity" has a great variety of meanings. And this can be explained. Different sides of identity correspond to various parts of a person's consciousness and indicate a certain stage of one's development. According to Z. Bauman, "the problem of identity has changed its shape and contents" (Bauman, 2005). Global transformations in the modern world have provoked great interest to the concept "identity".

3. Identity crisis and the ways out

Z. Bauman claims that the reason why scholars pay so much attention to this problem is the fact that modern society can be examined, evaluated and scrutinized through the principle of identity (Bauman, 2005). From youth to mature years a person is busy seeking identity. In the "new world disorder" which is called globalization (Bauman, 2005), when everyone is uncertain about tomorrow, which is absolutely unpredictable, this has become a burning issue. An individual needs a purport which gives the feeling of control over one's life. Identity helps a person to find the social niche and to avoid loneliness.

Z. Bauman points out several factors intensifying the feeling of uncertainty:

- 1 the world deprived of visible structure and visible logic (Bauman, 2005);
- 2 freedom of capital promoting polarization of society; an unprecedented scale of social inequality; no hope for a guaranteed job (Bauman, 2005);
- 3 pragmatism and short interpersonal relations with no steady rights and duties; instability and unpredictability of the market (Bauman, 2005);
- 4 no basis in the modern world into which "the route of one's life can be interweaved" (Bauman, 2005).

The modern uncertain, unpredictable and unstable situation frightens people and sets the task to acquire identity and make sure it is recognized by other people. Moreover, this situation demands that people choose identity in the right way and in the right time.

Z. Bauman emphasizes the idea that along with talks on *identity*, it is necessary to study carefully *identification*, which never comes to an end, and in which all of us are involved. Despite intrinsic proximity of the concepts "identity" and "identification" they are not synonyms. Identity of each person comprises obligatory elements of identity and not-identity. Provided identity is considered as the result or the process of identification and/or non-identification, identification is a process which leads to acquiring identity, "... the process of identification precedes the understanding of identity" (Zakovorotny, 1999).

One of the main challenges in the 21st century is confrontation between civilization standards and identity values. This confrontation is the cornerstone of so-called collision of identities. Multidirectional globalization processes promote identity crisis. The term "identity crisis", which is closely connected with E. Erikson's works, was used for the first time during World War II in a very certain situation. It was in a veterans' rehabilitation hospital on Mount Zion (Ericsson, 1996) Specifying the concept, the famous psychologist wrote that crisis "is understood as an inevitable turning point, the critical moment after which evolution will turn to this or that way, using possibilities to grow, ability to recover and further differentiation" (Erikson, 1996).

Entering new life, every person is sure to experience identity crises. It cannot be the same all the time. We may be satisfied with the reached identity for a short period of time but soon we start looking for another one. Each of us tries to find a new way again and again, to join a new identification community. Z. Bauman claims that a person can be potentially replaced and, therefore, vulnerable. Any social status, no matter how powerful, high and influential it may seem, is eventually absolutely relative (Bauman, 2005).

Crisis of identity cannot be painless. Being of different age, people experience it in different ways. The degree to which crisis is endured depends on a set of factors which include: rapid changes in the education system, cultural and economic globalization, ecological crisis, etc. Among other causes or sources of crisis of V. Höfle points out the following:

- inconsistency between a person's behaviour and general norms of behaviour, the feeling of uncertainty and senselessness because moral guidelines are disappearing;
- understanding that general norms are considered to be wrong;
- denial of conventional values;
- disharmony between personality and society (Höfle, 1994).

4. Conclusion

There can be the following consequences of identity crisis: unpredictability of an individual's behavior which was affected by the individual's crisis, an inadequate reaction to a new situation, the feeling of disorientation. All this plays into the hands of the totalitarian ideologies which lure by populist promises and propose simple solutions. These solutions seem more preferable than moral ethical standards. Now then the world is unstable and uncertain, there are interested people who offer so-called identification projects aimed to establish a new balance in life and manipulate with identity. In this regard social institutions including educational institutions, must set the task to maintain identity crisis and take part in "organizing more reasonable identity" (Höfle, 1994). The modern situation demands active social position because a person's self-fulfillment is impossible without it. The identity development problem, in particular, civil identity, is the most vital and important for young people for whom the formation of identity correlates with socialization process. Education could become an important factor to search new forms of identity. In each identity crisis there is a danger of unpredictability; being successfully overcome it promotes personality and society progress. One can perceive oneself and the environment only having perceived the logic of identity crisis. Identity crisis is a possibility and the mechanism to develop another identity; for this reason we need the ideology

reflecting scientific, political and religious thinking of culture capable to give to a person the answer to the question: "Who am I?" We can say that we have restored sensible identity if we have found universal values and guiding lines. V. Höhle gives two genetic prerequisites how to look for these values but they do not completely correlate between each other:

- 1 it is necessary to get separated from traditional values if you want to find new orientation;
- 2 developing new values is impossible without recognition of traditional values (Höhle, 1994).

The topical problem of identity attracts attention of the world scientific community. Studying and comprehending the essence of this phenomenon can become one of ways to create harmonious society.

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