

IDENTITY EDUCATION

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Abstract. *Family was the basis of socialization in traditional society. Older generation transmitted values to younger generation. Individuals accepted the social roles defined in the society. Nowadays, the socio-cultural conditions changed, which released individuals from the social destiny, but also shook their belief in traditional values. Now, children try to eliminate this loss of sense of identity through interactions with surroundings. However, they always look for more attractive development environment, therefore their interactions concern rather the virtual world than the real one. All personal relationships are weakened in virtual society. The influence of primary environments (family, neighborhood, peers) is marginalized. Thus, it is more and more difficult to achieve relatively stable points of reference – role models – which enable children to find who they want to be. Currently children search them beyond primary social structures, mostly within the scope of virtual communities. Thus, the most important role model for a child is the Internet with its resources, which sometimes does not support normal development. Therefore, defining oneself by the child is more reflexive and subjective. Hence, socialization of children becomes individual, personal and unique. Consequently, there is a need to establish a new space for socialization – the process of identity education. This article is an analytical description of the complex socialization of a child in the contemporary world. Against this background, it attempts to characterize conditions necessary to base this process on identity education as an act of self-knowledge.*

Keywords: *children; education; identity; pupil; socialization; society.*

Introduction

Contemporary processes of globalization bring disharmony between fast civilization development and lack of people's preparation to use its goods. In a traditional society, a child and then a young person inherited a stable hierarchy of values. In this way, the person acquired skills to function properly in the social environment that he or she lived in. Of course, the main basis of socialization was the family. The older generation, as more experienced, transmitted universal system of knowledge, views and values to the younger one. At particular stages of life, an individual adopted designated social roles, for which he or she had been preparing for a long time. Such a process of socialization shaped an unambiguous and clearly defined people, who fully accepted the existing conditions of social functioning and relatively easily found themselves in the society. This way of socialization functioned in the conditions

of stable cultural values and unchanging norms and standards of social life, which were characteristic of a culture called by Margaret Mead (2000) post-figurative. Transformation of technological, social and cultural conditions, which occurred along with the beginning of a new type of culture defined by Mead as pre-figurative, led to releasing individuals from their social destiny. As written by Charles Taylor (2001), now each person can become who he/she wants to be or who he/she can become in these conditions. Pluralization of the systems of values does not always lead to the extension of the scope of accepted diversity and it often brings existential tensions connected with the necessity to make choices, which, consequently, is a reason for closing oneself within the sphere of own, nationalistic cultural area. At the same time, individual's belief in traditional values is shaken, therefore the individual cannot find an objective answer to the questions: What do I want?, What am I like?, Who do I want to be? The identity of the individual is lost and consequently it remains trapped in the social reality characterized by multi-direction and parallelism of the spheres of activity and fulfilled roles, often none of which is dominant. Hence, this transformation of socio-cultural relations determines the need to establish a new level of conscious identity formation, which seems to be the process of socialization. This article is devoted to analytical description of the complexity of the problem of identity and socialization in contemporary times. Against this background, an attempt has been made to characterize the conditions that must be met in order to make this process based on identity education and, in this way, remaining an act of self-knowledge.

Building identity - socialization

The issue of identity has been subject of research for almost one hundred years, that is from the year 1919, when the notion "identity" was introduced for the first time by Croatian psychoanalyst Viktor Tausk. However, intensive interest in this issue started in the sixties of the 20th century and was triggered by works of Erik Erikson in the United States. Intensive and multidirectional research has been conducted since that time. Therefore, definition of the concept of identity provides differences in meaning resulting from different theoretical approaches. Currently, it is assumed that individual identity is what is between *biographical self* and *situated self*, or rather what results from their constant coexistence. Human identity forms, of course, during the whole life and it is a continuous process of gradual development of a set of social and cultural features focused on the individual. Relation between identity and awareness of the individual is often emphasized. Thus, identity emerges as sequence of following stages in the process of development of subjective awareness (individual self-knowledge). Acquired social experiences develop structures and

expand area of educational influence in the process of socialization (figure 1). Finally, appropriate socializing education develops humanistic relation SELF – OTHER, which is the base for understanding contemporary world.

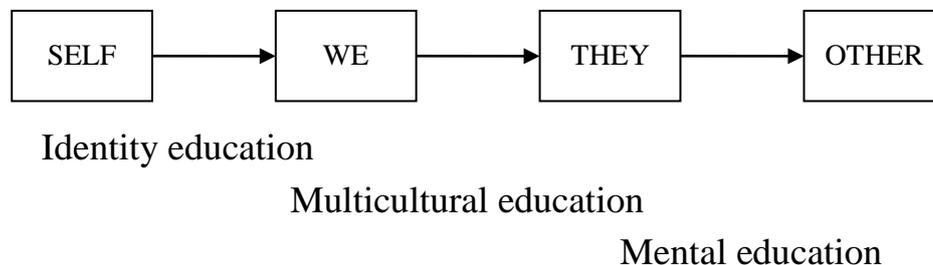


Figure 1. Stages of socializing education

Source: own studies

Society inevitably shapes an individual through interactive processes, social system and cultural factors, leaving a lot of more or less persistent elements in their personality. The contribution of individuals is also emphasized that they have in transmission of the effects of socialization processes influence. As it is described by Emile Durkheim (2016), on the one hand the individuals owe to the society everything best in them, which differentiate them from other people, their intellectual and moral culture, but on the other hand the society does not exist differently than in the individuals and through them. This processual act of bilingual impact became a basis to define various aspects of society functioning, which leads to great terminological inconsistency. Majority of definitions of socialization refers directly or indirectly to mechanism of emerging and shaping human personality, and through that – identity (Juszczyk-Rygałło, 2016). The notion of socialization is frequently equal, in terms of meaning, to upbringing as the teaching of values and social norm. It is not, however, totally justified because it comprises also undesired and unplanned influences. These accidental influences often become a reason for weakening social structures or even differentiation of social life.

Socialization is a process of formation of human behaviors in the social environment that lasts the whole life. In this process, the system of basic features is defined (somatic, psychical, social and intellectual aspects), which are carried by three levels of personal characteristics: personality, structure of SELF and personal identity. Through them the individual (person) is perceived both by oneself and by other people. Their relational structure is presented in figure 2. Personality is primary structure; it is a system of psychological mechanisms based on biological sphere of a person that defines way of perceiving the world and oneself as well as reacting to challenges of reality.

Biological sphere is connected with instincts, congenital needs and talent. They are primary needs that are initiators of child's behaviors. They determine ecological and axiological horizons necessary to full personal development of a person. Personal attributes based thereon are a kind of generator of individual behaviors and a source of creation of the personal SELF in the psychical sphere. The psychical sphere motivates the individual to undertake actions. It consists of psychical needs such as: need for acceptance, security, emotional reactions, new experiences. It is only through the dynamic structure of SELF, in the background of which personality remains, a personal identity is constructed in the social sphere.

The child's socialization (identity education) takes place through relations between the social environment and all three components of personal characteristics, shown in figure 2. These are the three mechanisms of psychosocial influence on personality, structure of SELF and personal identity.

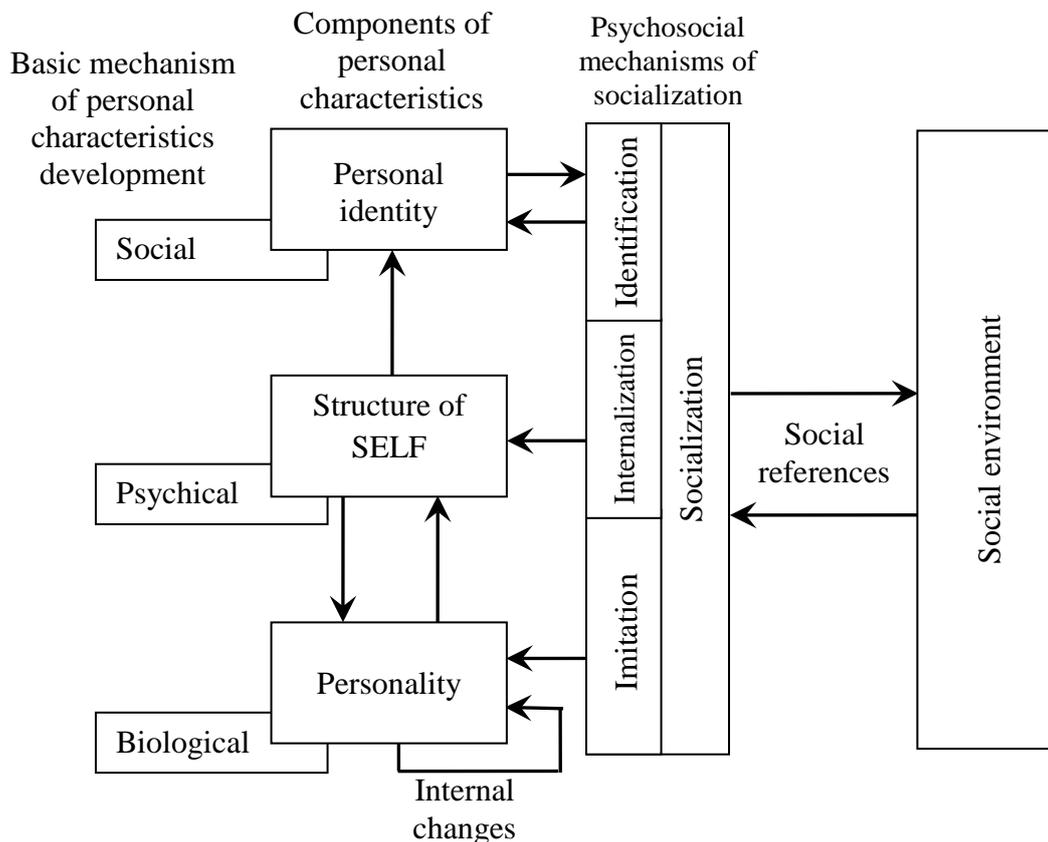


Figure 2. **Relational dependencies: Personality–SELF–Identity in the system of identity education**
 Source: own studies

These are respectively mechanisms of: imitation, internalization and identification. The mechanism of imitation occurs the earliest and consists in imitating roles borrowed from the world of adults. As a result of this training, it slowly transforms into internalization, which means adopting patterns of behaviors so that they become elements of personality and structure of SELF. Dependence between personality and the structure of SELF is based on the principle of conflict. The field of social interaction is personality itself. Roles that are defined by social features and assigned to an individual in particular community conflict with individuality of SELF, which aimed at sustaining own unique subjectivity. Only the recognition of both as independent of each other or inclusion of a social role in the individuality of SELF eliminates tensions between them. On the other hand, based on the heterogeneous SELF, some dynamic approaches of personal identity arises, which attribute potential heterogeneity and variability to personal identity. The SELF is a supreme category, which means the individual's relationships resulting from interpersonal relations and personal social references constitute identity shaped by the individual. The system of SELF comprises contents and basic processes necessary to enable the individuals to shape and sustain their own identity. Identity is built by existing social order through the mechanism of identification (conscious making choices). To a large extent, the features of identity are developed spontaneously on the conscious level in the process of socialization (not automatically) and are adopted more or less voluntarily. The development of identity depends, above all, on reflexive activity of an individual in the process of identity education, including in later life.

Primary and secondary socialization

We distinguish two basic stages: primary socialization (initial period), which comprises infancy and childhood, and secondary socialization (permanent period), which takes place in longer perspective and includes adolescence and adulthood. Processes taking place in these two periods of individual's life result from the same mechanisms (enhancement, imitation, symbolic message), however they influence identity differently. In the process of primary socialization a child is shaped by social environment. On the other hand, an adult in the process of secondary socialization remains an active participant of social life, takes part in culture and contribute to creation of the patterns of behavior. Of course, the effects of primary socialization are permanent and have impact on the whole life of the individual. Even conscious attempts to reject established norms, values or the patterns of behavior undertaken in the period of secondary socialization usually fail. The area of primary socialization is mainly personality and structure of SELF. Basic dimensions of personality are

congenital, therefore they are stable for the whole life. Other personal characteristics are open to changes and are the consequence of both biological transformation and environmental influences.

The period of infancy, which means the first year of life, is dominated by learning own physicality, but it is also time for development of social identity through establishing close emotional relationships with parents (mainly with mother). At the age of 2-3 years the children build foundations for their own autonomy; then they develop the structure of SELF in following years and on this basis their personal identity is established. In the period of childhood all the characteristics become more and more stable to become totally stable at the age of around 7 years. In the period of adolescence they become highlighted and their invariability is gradually increased till the age of around 30 years. James Marcia (1980) describes this period of identity formation in two stages. First of them is called exploitation. It covers the period from 10-12 to 15-16 years and refers to recognizing social environment through active searching of alternative solutions of occurring problems. The second period, covering years 16-17 to 18-20 is a phase of making commitments, which means taking responsibility for oneself, making choices concerning areas of personal identity and readiness to bear consequences of own actions. The quality of personality achieved in this period determines the quality of the structure of SELF and, consequently, determines personal identity readiness for the superstructure in the form of peripheral identities. During the adult life the content of identity is being enhanced.

Identity develops during primary as well as secondary socialization. In the period of primary socialization, on the basis of conscious SELF, the concept of oneself is built, reflecting various aspects of self-knowledge. In primary socialization of a child, personal identity is determined by two sociogenic personal attributes: subjective self and reflected self. No sooner than in the process of secondary socialization they are supplemented by two further elements, which create, together with the abovementioned ones, social identity: cultural ideal of personality and social roles. Subjective self is determined by the set of images, usually positive, about own identity, uniqueness and own SELF. It is developed under the influence of social environment – first by the parents and other members of the family and then by wider social community. In the course of individual development the subjective self becomes relatively independent on social environment and, finally, it is constituted as a permanent sense of self-acceptance. On the other hand, the reflected self is a set of individual's images about how someone is perceived and assessed by other people. It is created in relations with the social environment on the basis of formulated assessment and behaviors of other people. It can be, of course, a source of positive feelings (for example satisfaction and pride in oneself) as well as

negative ones (for example shame and humiliation). Even finally established, it is a variable component of personal identity, but its transformations are smooth (even crawling) and occur in the longer-term.

The subjective self is not equal to the reflected self in its identity content. Both of them, however, are perceived as the unified product of primary socialization – as personal identity, which is closed and stable construct as it refers to the central aspects in the system of SELF. The product of primary socialization is SELF identity (central) composed of three personality elements. And the supreme component – personal identity – is a basic plane to form social identity in the process of secondary socialization, as a sum of SELF identity (hard) and WE-identity (soft, elastic). Such structure of social identity is shown in figure 3. As far as WE-identity is concerned, its openness to changes, its multilayered and peripheral nature should be emphasized. Thanks to this peripheral-variable component, individual’s identity is not simply something given to an individual as a result of his or her activity, but it is something that must be routinely created and sustained by reflexive activity of the individual (Giddens, 2010).

Open and dynamic SOFT IDENTITY	Professional	Regional	Cultural	National	Ethnic	Group	... other	WE-identity (peripheral)	Social identity		
	Personal identity									SELF identity (central)	
	Structure of SELF										
	Personality										
	Closed and static HARD IDENTITY										

Figure 3. **Structure of social identity as a sum of SELF identity and WE-identity**

Source: own studies

Continuous reinterpreting of social identity in the process of secondary socialization takes place through building and rebuilding peripheral components of WE-identity, which is described as soft and dynamic identity (susceptible to changes). However, the central component of identity, anchored in the structure of SELF and developed in the process of primary socialization, remains unchanged. We define it as hard identity (static). An important factor that gives

primary socialization an advantage over processes of secondary socialization is the fact that the first one is of iconic nature and the second one (in general) – is optional (Zduniak, 2013). Therefore mistakes made during socialization of a child can be hardly corrected later (only through modification of reflected self), Even though the correction is possible, it is a long-term process that not always brings positive results.

Educational identity formation

Identity education is a lifelong process. Its significance is different when building primary identity and different in the period of secondary identity formation. Personal characteristics are consequences of biological changes (internal factors) and environmental influences (external experiences). The relations of an individual emerges from interpersonal relations and personal social references and they constitute identity shaped through the mechanism of identification (conscious choice). In this way, through developing own personal social traits, the person simultaneously builds social order because the necessity of existence of social order originates from the biological nature of a human being. Intellectual traits of personality (views and convictions that constitute the picture of oneself) are linked with social context through social features. On the other hand, they result directly also from somatic and psychical features and then they are views, that are developed independently by the individual. They are also more susceptible to changes than views developed in existing social context. In this case individual remains more steadfast in his convictions even when there are no rational arguments.

Constant and unchanging characteristics of identity are developed in the process of primary socialization, created in the process of identity education. Development of secondary identity depends on these characteristics in further life. The main goal should be to use such means and manners of communication that omit these aspects of reality that are unfavorable for the child and emphasize these that are particularly important for appropriate identity formation. The most important task in identity education should be supporting parents, family, relatives and other social structures considered as primary ones. Currently, the tendency is observed that parents give up transmitting their own system of values to children as they do not believe in effectiveness of their actions in the changing world (Delsol, 2005). Child's interactions with the environment refer mostly to virtual world than the real one because the child always look for an attractive environment of development. In the virtual society of alternatives all structures of personal relations are weakened. The influence of primary environments (family, neighbors, peers) is weakened and they are reduced to the private sphere and located on the margin of social life. In this

way, it is more and more difficult to achieve relatively stable points of reference – role models – thanks to which the child can state who he or she wants to be. Nowadays, these role models are searched beyond primary social structures, mainly within the scope of virtual community. Hence, it can be assumed that the Internet becomes the most important role model for a child, however its content does not always support the child's normal development. Therefore, nowadays defining oneself by a child is more and more reflexive and, simultaneously, it is mainly the child's subjective projection. In this way, socialization of the child becomes individually created, unique and personal process. Therefore, there is a need to establish a new surface of socialization that should include modern forms of participation where Internet is a kind of a driving force in the space of public communication. Identity education must look for answers to the questions concerning models of transmitting values adjusted to condition, concept and competencies of the child because the results of primary socialization are noticeable for the whole life of the individual, even when in the course of secondary socialization the person decides to reject some of instilled norms, values or patterns of behavior.

Irrespective of adopted level of socialization, the applied didactic methods should help children to know themselves, stimulate them to self-reflection, which should lead to development of self-knowledge concerning creation of own image. Personal identity is built and sustained as a result of cognitive activity, undertaken initiatives and actions, on the basis of earlier experiences and everyday communication. In the course of all these activities the skills are developed to go beyond oneself, beyond own SELF. Hence, the goals of identity education focus on two areas:

- cognition and understanding of oneself (SELF),
- cognition and understanding of own culture (WE), which open the way to awareness education, comprising two following areas:
- cognition and understanding of other cultural circles (THEY),
- cognition and understanding of representatives of other cultures (OTHER).

Identity education forms primary identity and awareness education is a surface for building secondary education. Such socializing activity eliminates tendencies to close oneself within the sphere of own values (own SELF) and opens way to cooperation and sharing experiencing (with OTHERs). The intermediary in building the relation SELF – OTHER is intercultural education, which builds relations WE – THEY. However, to bring positive results, it must be based on communication leading to mutual understanding without the need to dominate or being driven by prejudices and anxiety.

Conclusion

As Zygmunt Bauman defined it (1994), identity is not given as a gift or a sentence without right of appeal. It is something that is built and can be built in different ways. It will not occur at all if it is not constructed in some way. Thus, there is a need to use such a method that is a conscious socialization influence, which guarantees the young person will be well prepared to deal with challenges of contemporary worlds. Identity education is such a solution.

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