Zagorka Golubović

Učitelja Miloša Jankovića 12/I, RS–11000 Beograd
zgolubovic@eunet.rs

An Anthropological Conceptualisation of Identity

Abstract

The anthropological approach to the concept of identity is needed because "identity" (either personal or collective) is not naturally "given", but it is culturally defined and constituted, for human beings live in cultural settings as "a second nature of man"; so they are humanly conditioned and conceptualised in different "ways of peoples' lives". Being that culture makes an essential context of social life and of the personality foundation, it provides the pattern of the common way of living and thinking of the communal experiences as a value-referential framework upon which definitions and interpretations of identities rely. Thereby, cultural paradigm enables researches to understand what identity (collective and personal) expresses in different socio-historical conditions and ideological connotations, assuming that this concept is dynamic vs. the other one, e.g. national pattern of identity which is narrow as well as exclusive; and as a static category, it does not suppose possibility of change. In the paper a traditionally oriented conceptualisation of identity in Serbia will be also treated, together with its influence upon the slow changes within a democratic transition during the new millennium.

Key words

anthropological conceptualisation of identity, identification, individuation, cultural pattern of identity, national pattern of identity

Introduction

Concept of *identity* is very difficult to explain because of the complexity of its meaning. That is why there is often one-dimensional (incomplete) interpretation of this concept, or a confusion of different terms used to explain the meaning of identity. It is also used within an ahistorical background (non-contextual one) in which it is difficult to be explained.

However, the basic meaning of identity refers to where one (a person or a group) belongs, and what is expressed as "self-image" or/and "common-image", what integrate them inside self or a group existence, and what differentiate them *vis-à-vis* "others".

E. Erikson has written about the development of identity in the course of time, because children do not possess identities, and adolescents strive to attain it. Therefore, identity crisis appears in the process of identity formation.[1] The same author also writes about possibility of an individual to possess several

---

[1]
See: "Identity" in A. Kuper & J. Kuper, *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, Routledge, London 2004. All quotations are from Serbian translation, *Enciklopedija društvenih nauka*, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd 2009, here p. 474.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

26

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

identities, about which is usually spoken in terms of "social roles" differenti-
ating that individual from the others.

Anthony Giddens has warned to the fact that social identities are different in
different historical projects: while traditional identity conveys from genera-
tion to generation, in modern societies identity is conceived as "a matter of
rational action and being dynamic". Giddens thinks that one may speak of
identity as "a symbolic construction", which helps people to find their own
place in time and preserve continuity.[2]

The question put forth by C. Taylor is interesting, namely, "how computers,
television and other means for a construction of the virtual reality…" form
and adopt identity of modern people, regarding also the phenomena of "iden-
tity theft" and manipulation of the controlled identity.[3]

However, the concept of identity has been used in different terms: a) as a
"primordial identity" being conceived as a naturally given and unchangeable
entity – belonging to the ethnic category; and b) as a socio-cultural, political
or ideologically constructed collective sense of communal or personal iden-
tity. That is to say, one may speak about "national identity" and "cultural
identity", the latter may include national-cultural tradition capable of being
changed in a socio-historical process, or simply by cultural diffusion (e.g.
adopting certain elements of another culture); while ethnic identity is tied
with a nation-state and ethnicity, representing a premodern society which is
resistant to change.

The difference between national/ethnic identity and identity based on cultural
pattern consists in the following: the latter is open to reconceptualisation and
may appear in plural forms, while the former relies on an overidentification
with one/ethnic tradition as an exclusive model of collective life, being closed
in itself disregarding new social processes. They are differentiated also in the
fact that culturally conditioned identity recognises the existence of individual/
unique identity and collective/communal identity, while national/ethnic iden-
tity has only its collective expression according to which all individuals have
to submit.

In anthropological theory[4] *cultural paradigm* is applied in order to explain
the genesis of identity and the complexity of its meaning. Therefore, there
is an agreement that identity is specifically "anthropological category", in
terms of identification with one's own culture and self-reflection of the way
one is to live in a given socio-cultural environment, because it is a matter of
conviction, or a possibility of choice due to its multidimensional expressions:
as class, status, profession, styling or symbolic connotation.

Alain Touraine[5] paid attention to the confusion of the notion of identity when
it gets a negative character and may become dangerous if it sticks to a nation
or religion with the emphases on collectivity, because it suffocates individu-
ality and alternative forms of identity. When being closed to one nation or
community, which are defined in terms of identity, the concept of identity
becomes an ideological construction having tendency to be determined as a
"natural community".

But the need of belonging may have a destructive nature: it happens when
certain individuals who are frustrated (within the family or social community)
long for the identification with a militant group which is aggressive, and in or-
der to hide one's own helplessness they themselves express violence towards
the others.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

27

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

Therefore, the following theses and issues should be debated, although all of them cannot be considered in this paper:[6]

1) identity is not a *neutral* category, nor it is inborn (congenital) trait;

2) what the questions to which the concept of identity replies are – as far as speaking of *personal identity*, or *collective identity*;

3) on which basis (background) identity formation takes place;

4) which conditions and mechanisms lead to the constitution of identity;

5) through which phases is identity constituted, and what is the difference between phase I (*identification*) from phase II (*individuation*);

6) what socio-cultural conditions protect the particular forms of identity (class, nation, race);

7) why it is necessary to recognise two patterns of identity – national and cultural one?

The first step is to comprehend both an abstract concept of identity, and recognition of oneself as personality, due to the fact that individuals do not posses identity upon birth, although they often adopt "identity image" created by their parents which does not express their individual dispositions. However, in order to attain self-identification individuals have to overcome many obstacles (e.g. the traditionally established habits, parents' authorities), and also to surmount their lack of self-knowledge and find out who they really are. In a traditional society, it is not easy a task to achieve.

Let me remind you of Erich Fromm's saying: "Many individuals die before they have been born"; that is to say, they have not become aware of who they are as persons, but lived with the identity prescribed to them – either by parents, social groups, or authorities.[7]

Unless those questions do not become subject of serious debate, the controversies regarding the concept of identity will continue, and will make difficulties in interpersonal and intercultural relations. The clash between individual self-identification and inherited collective identification appears, in particular, when cultural patterns change and produce conflicting norms and values, thus making confusion in individuals' thinking on which pattern to accept in attempt to define their personal identity. This is more acute when universal values and moral principles become relativised, giving rise to manipulations from different external factors (political, ideological, or the influence of authoritarian mechanisms).

One of the arguments may be found in the recent history of ex-Yugoslavia, wherein the confusion with *ethnic/national* pattern of identity, which prevailed as the only "authentic" form of identification in such a multicultural

---

2
Ibid, p. 475.

3
Ibid., p. 476.

4
E. Erikson, J. Piaget, A. Giddens, J. Habermas, Z. Bauman, etc.

5
A. Touraine, *Un nouveau paradigme, Pour comprehendre le monde d'aujourd'hui*, Fayard, Paris 2005, p. 287.

6
For further research, see my other writings in the quoted literature.

7
Such form of identification, which is usually categorized as conformity orientation, is very well analysed by D. Riesman in his book *The Lonely Crowd*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1950, and E. Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1942.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

28

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

society, has rejected the *cultural paradigm* that has given a peaceful life for all of its people for decades before disintegration of the country in the 1990s.

The crisis of identities (individual and collective) profoundly manifests as an indicator (and result) of economic, social and civilisation crisis, that promotes confusion about individuals' and groups' relations and their position in postmodern civilisation. These have produced uncertainty, fears of being left alone, hesitation in decision whether to stick to individual rights or to conform to the mainstream ideology. Such problems are more difficult to solve in an authoritarian society than in democratic one; although even democracy has not yet resolved those problems, because every government wishes to express its power over the constitution of their population's images. But it is also true that citizens find it easier to follow prescribed rules than to make efforts of searching for their own principles.

Therefore, it is necessary to clearly differentiate two forms of identity: *national identity* from *civic identity*, which are legitimate collective forms of expressing peoples' belonging; both expressions implying the given culturally interpreted form of human existence, but within different cultural foundation (in linguistic expressions, communication norms, views of the given society, moral patterns, etc.).

I am presenting the anthropological approach to this topic by considering identity as a *socio-culturally conditioned* phenomenon, whatever forms it takes in different historical conditions in a long run of historical process. That refers both to collective identification and *self-identification* of individuals (the latter being named as: ego, self, or *moi*).

Another difference should be also mentioned: between *traditional* and *modern* understanding of the type of belonging: a) group identity may be experienced within a close group with the exclusion of "others", of those who are different (either ethnically, by social status or other group characteristics); or b) a liberal comprehension of identity which is open to the differences and tolerates "otherness", in terms of a close interconnection between "self" and "others" (as alter-ego of the former).

That is to say, identity concept does not belong to a natural/biological category, but it is socio-culturally impregnated expression of both individual/personal and collective way of existence and recognition. This means that it is always a matter of choice, unlike its interpretation as naturally given and biologically inherited ways of understanding and explaining oneself and collective existence.

Constitution of identity/ies

In the formation of a person, the first step is to adopt a group identity, so as to satisfy his/her need for belonging somewhere as a member of a community (of a family, or a larger community, to the given society/state, to a generation, etc.). A person recognises oneself through the adaptation to the concept of "we" as a primary form of an understanding where one belongs. In this phase a person accepts norms, believes and experiences of his/her group as a "proper place of living", because in a collective security one escapes from loneliness and from a threat of the unknown world he/she is unable to cope with upon birth.

It takes a long way and time for a person to grow and become capable of transcending the collective form of identity that keeps one being tied within the prescribed authority's view, without living space for exploring the own recog-

nition as "oneself", as personality with different traits and needs/interests.[8] Although both collective and individual identities are culturally conditioned, there are rather different elements and methods regarding their formation.

Collective identity comes from *identification* of a person with, first of all, the "primary group" (through the "primary socialisation" within the family); then it goes on the same way through the "secondary socialisation" (through classroom, factory line, party line and state policy norms, as well as through the impact of different ideologies or mythologies).

However, *personal identity* can be developed only by free determination, representing a kind of dissociation from an inherited collective form, i.e. in terms of looking to oneself through his/her own eyes, when self-consciousness is developing – it is the phase when personal free choice takes a decisive role in the process of *individuation*.[9] In this state individuals are capable of being differentiated from one another.

Thus Gordon Allport has declared that no single personality is identical with another, for each one becomes "idiom" with its own character structure, complex of needs, self-estimated views and respect for rights to autonomy.

Collective identity provides a feeling of being a part of the given community (group, people, state), while personal identity means a step forward, out of an inherited (prescribed) "social character structure" (according to Fromm's definition), seeking to find out who "I am" with one's own traits, characteristics and needs, as a distinct person. As Erikson mentioned: this is the phase in which an individual creates "self-notion" through which he/she becomes different from the group and recognisable by the others as a unique personality. This can be attained by critical opposition to those who will be considered as dependant creatures. But if the first stage has not been transcended, a person would suffer from frustration.[10]

Transformation from the phase of identification to individuation is a crucial process during person's maturation in terms of *emancipation* from "ascribed, inherited and inborn determination of social character… transforming identity from something as 'being given' into a 'task' which should be fulfilled with recognition of consequences".[11]

In the process of self-determination a person is confronted with the question: what identity to choose; and so very often may experience "the identity crisis". Which is to say, that creation of personal identity ("l'expression de soi" – as it is defined by Mucchielli[12]) is a difficult task, because the individual has to break off with the *umbilical cord* by which he/she has been bound with his

---

[8]
The first phase of identity George Herbert Mead characterised as a "glass- looking self" in his book *Mind, Self and Society*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1934.

[9]
In the chapter "Moral Development and Ego Identity" in Habermas' book *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, Beacon Press, Toronto 1979 (p. 85), the author points out the links between moral development and ego's maturation, explaining it as follows: in the process of moral development ego comprehends the difference between *norms* and *principles* (values), thus developing an ability to judge according to the principles and make

the choice among alternatives regarding believes and ideas.

[10]
E. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, Norton, New York 1968, pp. 244, 263.

[11]
Z. Bauman, "Identity in the globalising World", *Social Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2001, p. 124.

[12]
A. Mucchielli, *L'identité*, PUF, Paris 1986, p. 5.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

30

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

collective "ethos" providing social security and peaceful life. That is the rea-
son why a lot of individuals do not succeed in attaining the second phase.[13]

Both collective and self-identity consist of original filiations and accultura-
tion (education). However, in the first case the main role is played by histori-
cal factors like: fate, habits, norms, cultural codes, ideological orientations.
But, beside them, elements of mentality have also important influence: col-
lective opinions, stereotypes, collective sentiments. When personal identity is
in question, self-conscious and personal education are more important. And
as Habermas wrote: transfer from habits and collective norms to values and
moral principles implies personal development and ability of one to choose
specific tasks and fulfil one's own goals in order to satisfy a set of chosen
needs. In one word, self-identity is founded on person's freedom to choose
autonomy of his/her life-prospects and mental development.

When speaking about collective identity of a person, what matters as the most
important task, in order to become the member of a group, is *accommodation*
to the given socio-cultural circumstances and requirements which are collec-
tively shared. And for the sake of group's integration it is often not allowed
for its members to make a second step and become autonomous personalities
having courage to reject a simple accommodation to the given orders, and
search for their own needs, traits and abilities.

The formation of personality may be attained only during the process of a re-
flexive internalisation of cultural achievements, and self-estimation of social
norms, meanings and claims that have been imposed by historical traditions.
That implies, on the one side, breaking off with a collective traditional deter-
mination, and "separation" from "we" concept to whom one has to be sub-
jected; but on the other side, tracing a way to "selfhood", i.e. to be expressed
as the recognisable "Self", whose difference from the mass represents his/her
personal character structure. Only then, when a person emerges as a unique
figure, one may speak of individual identity as *emancipation* in the process
of ego's development.

Paul Ricœur, in his book *Soi-même comme un autre*, describes such a state
as a knowledge one has about oneself but in a connection with the "other";
or in Aristotelian terminology, which the author mentions, it is explained as a
phase when *phronesis* originates as practical wisdom in terms of a "plan for
living" in ethical-cultural sense. That marks personal character as a system of
permanent dispositions according to which a person becomes personality.[14]

Development of personal identity (in terms of self-identification) in a demo-
cratic society has to pass from the "collective ethos" to one's own self-image
and self-esteem in order to become a free *citizen*. Otherwise, if the person fails
to go through the necessary evolutionary passage – from collective ethos to
self understanding of one's own needs and goals – one may speak of *conform-
ism* as a way of behaviour characteristic to the "authoritarian personality".

Which path of development individuals' growth will take depends, in the first
place, on the type of *socialisation* and *education*; which are, however, de-
pendent on the character of social order (be it authoritarian or democratic),
and cultural norms as well as the system of values (be it an open cultural mi-
lieu, or traditionally closed/patriarchal culture, based on habits and inherited
system of norms[15]).

When regarding types of identity, Mucchielli writes more concretely about
the influence of social conditions, and numerates the following: level of pros-
perity, religious and cultural activities, types of population's participation, cir-
culation of information, cooperation or socio-cultural conflicts.[16] The author

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

31

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

also explains what culture does within the process of identity development by saying: "La culture intériorisé c'est l'ensemble acquis des principes culturels (croyances, norms et valeurs) des représentations collectives et des modèles et code de références."[17] That is to say, culture offers, firstly, adaptation for reducing anxiety and providing the system of security. But culture also influences individuals' mentality system, providing an interpretation of culture through "le savoir sur l'universe qui rapporté a soi-même".[18] For Mucchielli it is important to have in mind two forms of identification: "identification with the other" and "identification in the other", which makes a passage from collective identification to individual identity possible – from empirical ego to the Self as a conscious subject ("Je" and "soi"[19]), which has developed the sentiment for differences and autonomy.

Summarising, one may say that culture provides patterns of "ways of life" (for both collective and individual existence); as well as ways/types of thinking and believing besides common experiences and frames of value-references. Nevertheless, being that culture is pluralistic, identity itself may have plural forms not only in different cultures, but within the individual's and collective's expressions, and also in the context of their experiences of the given ways of life.

Looking to the inner side of people's life experiences and *emotions* that are influenced by the letter, Dominique Moïsi[20] explains that different impact of emotions, which prevail in different cultures, form different life orientations. Accordingly, people will differently experience their identification, opposing the opinion of the authors who take into account only rational comprehension. "Today quest for identity by peoples uncertain of who they are, of their place in the world and their prospects for a meaningful future, have replaced ideology as the motor of history…".[21] Thus he concludes: culture obtains much more concrete influence to the groups'/individuals' experience of reality: a) "culture of hope" promotes confidence based on the conviction that tomorrow will be better than today (implying an optimistic view, and thus a positive identity); b) "culture of fear" represents the absence of confidence, being apprehensive about the present, expecting the future to become more dangerous (provoking suspicious view and unstable or confused identity); c) "culture of

---

13
In English the same term, i.e. *subject* is used both for those who accept collectively imposed identification (while in Serbian language it is called 'podanik', with a meaning closer to 'vassal'), and for individuals who attain self-identification as free personalities (for whom in Serbian the term 'subjekt' is used).

14
Quoted from Serbian translation: *Sopstvo kao drugi*, Biblioteka Aletheia, Beograd 2004, p. 180.

15
This was very well explained by Pierre Bourdieu by using the term *habitus* which is an expression of the stable traits of life styles, underlining the traditional cultures, which emphasises collective "ethos".

16
Mucchielli, *L'identité*, pp. 13–15.

17
Ibid., p. 15.

18
Ibid., p. 25.

19
Mucchielli explains that "le Je corespond à ce qi'il ya de personnel dans la conduite, il constitue le facteur de spontanéité… Le soi est une possibilité de conscience car il est constitué par l'interaction dialectique du Je et de Moi…" (ibid., p. 44).

20
D. Moïsi, *The Geopolitics of Emotion: How Cultures of Fear, Humiliation and Hope are Reshaping the World*, Doubleday, New York 2009.

21
Ibid., p. 4.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

32

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

humiliation" represents injured confidence of those who have lost hope in the future, "the feeling that you are no longer in control of your life…", producing hopelessness.[22]

Plurality of identities

Due to the fact that identity takes plural forms in the modern era, it is often difficult to attain harmony of identities, both individually and collectively. As Anthony Smith wrote: multidimensional identity should be taken into account, according to gender, territory/homeland, status and ethnicity, as well as ideology and convictions.[23]

Therefore, it is almost impossible to avoid identity conflicts, at least certain uncertainties. The conflict may arise when the main current of individuals' identity does not correspond to the mainstream definition of collective identity (particularly if hierarchical relationships are established between individual members and society); or in the case when a "closed society" is in question in which a fixed, inherited type of identity functions as a rule; as well as when identity is reduced to particular forms of belonging (as class, race, nation/ethnic group). Individuals are thus blocked in searching and defining their own self-identification, because a one-sided collective identification demands a strict adaptation to the habits/customs, symbols and values of the particular tradition.

Thereby, it is important to analyse: a) the model of society's system and culture; b) the official paradigm for the construction of identities, both individual and collective one; c) mainstream system of values which influences determination and choice of the given populations' identities.

Two conflicting models of identity are mostly evident in the so-called postmodern societies: *traditional national pattern* (which prevails on the Eastern part of the continent), and *Western cultural pattern*. What model will be adopted depends on the type of social policy which will become dominant: nationally determined or culturally articulated. Identity crisis comes into being when those two models penetrate one another, producing confusion, uncertainty and anomie.

Smith offers an explanation why national and cultural pattern of identity cannot be reconciled: because national identity, being based on ethnic belonging, promotes national mythologies, creates collective sentiments about common ancestors and territories and common fates, that are bound with national symbols as signs of an idealised "golden age" of the heroic past.[24] Such a pattern of traditional identity cannot just be inscribed in the modern way of life; and if it still persists, a modern cultural paradigm cannot be functional.

The same author explains why national identity is still superior by suggesting that its functions are even today important for a stable people's lives, because "…it satisfies the answer concerning the problem of 'personal oblivion', identification with 'nation' which is in a secular era the most reliable way to overcome finality of death… by offering a strong and glorious future, like one's heroic past."[25]

Those two identity patterns are contradictory and cannot be mixed up because of: national pattern which promotes collective identity, that is, "*determination of social standing with a compulsive and obligatory self-determination…*";[26] imposing homogenisation of people as the main principle of the nation-state's policy. Meanwhile, cultural pattern aspires to emancipation of individuals and

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

33

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

collectives from the "ascribed, inherited and inborn determination… trans-
forming human 'identity' from a 'given' into a 'task'".[27]

Habermas has written that the difference between traditional society and mod-
ern society consists in the basic difference of the rules: the former is ruled by
habitual norms, while the latter creates their norms based on principles; and
that is why the modern man has a plurality of identities that may be freely
chosen on disposal.[28]

The crisis of identity is intensified "with episodic life conditions" of instabil-
ity of all aspects of social existence and altered standards of morality, ac-
cording to Bauman.[29] Therefore, it is becoming more difficult to recognise
one's own identity, for in a mass consumer society it is almost impossible to
differentiate "who is who"; because "individuals as consumers, whose main
object is to collect things, become indivisible parts of the groups in the market
centres." This is indicated by Djuro Šušnjić (esteemed Serbian social scien-
tist), when he writes: "I am there where I do not hide behind a group wherein
I become its depersonalised representative".[30] And according to Lipovetsky,[31]
the "ethos of consumerism reconstructs all the spheres of life… producing an
absence of life-esteem".

Bauman explains why the concept of identity has become the problem number
one in the scientific research today; and answers that it is precisely due to the
emerging *crisis of identity*. He offers the following explanation: in the post-
modern world one needs to change oneself and the existing conditions as an
active participant (i.e. as a subject), to develop new forms of self-identifica-
tion in order to create autonomy; however, the "New World Order" rather
promotes conformity as a preferable type of behaviour, preventing maturity
of individuals as self-conscious beings.

That is why conflict of identities accelerates in the "New World Order". This
way, a feeling, both of individuals and collectives, of losing their identities
arises, which becomes the main reason of frustration in the era of globalisa-
tion. With globalisation of the World Order the problem becomes more acute,
not only in theoretical/philosophical sense, but also in actual life of commu-
nities and their members. This is due to the fact that the mainstream model
of globalisation, created by the superpowers, demands unification and shows
ignorance regarding the existing differences (geographical, cultural, indivi-

22
Ibid., pp. 5–6.

23
A. Smith, *National Identity*, Penguin Books,
London 1991. All the quotations are taken
from Serbian translation: *Nacionalni identi-
tet,* XX vek, Beograd 1998, here pp. 15–18.

24
Ibid., pp. 120, 145.

25
Ibid., pp. 248–249.

26
Bauman, "Identity in the globalising World",
p. 124.

27
Ibid.

28
Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution
of Society*, p. 87.

29
Z. Bauman, *Life in Fragments. Essays in
Postmodern Morality*, Blackwell, Cambridge
1998, p. 43.

30
Dj. Šušnjić, *Dijalog i tolerancija*, Čigoja, Beo-
grad 1997, pp. 421–422.

31
G. Lipovetsky, *Le bonheur paradoxal. Essai
sur la société d'hyperconsommation*, Galli-
mard, Paris 2006. Quotations taken from Ser-
bian translation: Ž. Lipovecki, *Paradoksalna
sreća. Ogled o hiperpotrošačkom društvu*,
Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića,
Novi Sad 2008, pp. 153, 169.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

34

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

dual), which is in the sharp contrast with the modern needs for plural expressions and self-determination of individuals and societies/cultures.[32]

Postmodern man has lost his right and stopped striving to become an autonomous and active part of the process of self-determination and a particular identification with one's own community. That is why the message "work on yourself" has been the most important philosophical task nowadays as well as it was in the Antiquity – sent as a crucial message by Socrates in his famous words: "know thyself" in order to be capable of recognising others. Such a message becomes even more acute today when people as personalities have been lost within mobs of non-recognisable individuals and undifferentiated multitude of crowds.

As a reaction to such a conception of global identity, Richard Rorty declared an expectation that European Union would be capable of composing an alternative concept of the world order.[33] And a similar consideration Kopić found in Jacques Derrida's saying that it is Europe which could sow the seeds of a new altermodern policy free from any eurocentrism.[34] In both expressions Europe is imagined as an open space for cultural creations of the entire world. And I believe that this is the only right inspiration as far as the constitution of European identity is concerned.

However, the practical policy of European integration does not follow such suggestions. On the contrary, "European identity" is understood and planned in terms of unification, i.e. standardisation according to one undisputable model imposed by the EU administration, because what postmodern societies should "like" and are to do is decided by the bureaucratic administration in Brussels, which believes that the "New World Order" would be much better if all its members were much alike one another, with whom the world's organisation could easily rule. However, nobody who creates such an Order has in mind the fatal results, that is, how much of human potentials could be lost if imagination and creativity of individuals and collectives were imperilled, without anyone responsible for that unreasonable policy.

That is the reason why one may speak nowadays about construction of quasi-identities as a result of the absence of free imagination of different societies and cultures; because such an identity has been created on an illusion of individual's and collective's continuity in a global space, while in fact, world is rapidly moving – and that produces anomie.

The situation becomes worse due to the existing clash of two contradictory political demands: from liberal individualism with recognition of differences, to neo-liberal principle of unification which is being dictated by the market mechanisms and economic rationality plus procedural rationality, which do not care about individual autonomy and national/social sovereignty, those belonging to the fundamental human rights proclaimed by democratic constitutions.

What is needed instead is a redefinition of the mainstream model of globalised identity in terms of reconciliation of individual and communal factors in the concept of "global community". We may say that the main shortcoming of the "global policy" is, first of all, neglect of the plurality principle of contemporary civilisations, which demands taking care of plurality of identities in harmony with cultural differences all over the world. Meanwhile, the conception which prevails concerning the "New Global Order" follows the policy which reduces the entire globe to the Western (or even more restricted American) civilisation. And when such a policy does not care about important differences amongst individuals and communities, which mark their unique-

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

35

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

ness, "New World Order" becomes very much alike Orwell's "Big Brother" imagination.[35]

When all ideas are standardised under the umbrella of marketing/consumer competition, and all values expressed within the utilitarian principles (out of morality), for the benefits of profit-making and growth of economic capital;[36] and when the whole development has been reduced to only one/economic model of rationality, individuals and communities are deprived of new visions and alternatives.

If one compares what Mark Amstutz writes in his impressive book *International Ethics: Concepts, Theories and Cases in Global Politics*,[37] about what international ethics assumes in the case of a good global government, with the actual practice, one should be aware that the latter is far from the imagined conception. It is because in the latter the substantive principles have not been satisfied, such as: justice of the international order; search for the possible alternatives through the application of moral principles; just global institutions; and the last but not the least, estimation of moral values of the international regimes.[38] Therefore, the author concludes: "There is no competent conception of political justice", thus "a search for the international order might be inconsistent with search for justice."[39]

But Gianni Vattimo is more optimistic towards an alternative "European identity" because: "Europe is as a project of political construction… based upon free belongings of citizens and states with equal rights… as one of political ideals which is capable of promoting free will and stirring up a fire of souls".[40] However, more writers disagree with this way of thinking, believing that such ideals are still wishful thinking in the actual EU government, because there are signs of inner conflicts which threaten to split the Union. That is to say, the new paradigm of EU identity has not been created yet, because the policy, which is oriented towards the USA model, strives more to the unification than respecting diversities of socio-cultural conditions of the given members of the Union. Even though all European societies which joined the Union made that decision by their free will, yet, when they became the members, they

32
See Smith, *National Identity*, pp. 244–245.

33
This is taken from the book by M. Kopić, *Sekstant. Skice o duhovnim temeljima svijeta,* Službeni glasnik, Beograd 2010, p. 70. The author quoted the above sentence from Rorty's book *Humiliation or Solidarity?*.

34
Ibid., p. 71.

35
It was not by accident that the show named "Big Brother" became popular in mass media all over the world, because modern people recognize themselves through such a play, and reproduce their own everyday life.

36
Postmodern theory does not pay attention to Pierre Bourdieu's more complex understanding of human ways of life, who has written about different kinds of "capital", beside economic one, that influence existence of people, e.g.: "cultural capital", "symbolic capital",

etc. They should be taken as important elements in investigating the quality of life in terms of differentiated human conditions.

37
M. Amstutz, *International Ethics: Concepts, Theories and Cases in Global* Politics, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD [3]2008. All quotations here are from Serbian translation: *Međunarodna etika i globalna politika: pojmovi, teorije i slučajevi*, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd 2008.

38
Ibid., p. 24.

39
Ibid., p. 348.

40
Gianni Vattimo, *Nichilismo ed emancipazione. Etica, politica, diritto*, Garzanti libri, Milano 2003. Here the quotations are taken from Serbian translation, *Nihilizam i emancipacija: etika, politika, pravo*, Adresa, Novi Sad 2008, p. 150.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

36

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

were obliged to follow standardised demands from above (dictated by the EU administration), regardless of their real needs/interests and traditions.

That is why some authors write, when the model of the "Global World" is concerned, about a new *colonisation pattern*, because it is quite obvious who is in command when the creation of that model is in question, and who is in possession of power to define criteria who will become the member of the Union. So to say, the new members of the Union lose their cultural identities and freedom, becoming incapable of rationally estimating whether the EU policy is ready to satisfy their needs, because a standardised schedule has been formulated by the EU administration in one form for all, while particular societies are in the position to "take it or leave it".

Irrationality of such a unified conception of EU integration breaks out particularly in last few decades, which certain authors compare with the conception of globalisation, identity pattern of which has been estimated as inadequate. For both concepts (of globalisation and EU integration) suffer from almost the same defects: inconsistency of democratically guaranteed universal human rights and the expression of diversities and needs for self-determination. This means that the European Union has not become a desired configuration of multicolour designs united by universal human rights and values, but all members either preserve their traditional cultural identities, or assimilate their way of life to the unified model. Therefore, one may say that dissatisfaction with globalisation and EU integration results from a bureaucratic construction of two abstract giant communities, to which all members are compelled to submit according to a ready-made model prescribed by the super-power's demands.

Thereby, Europe should be in search for a new paradigm, because the concept of European identity has not been clearly defined, as Noëlle Burgi pointed out by putting forward the question: "Does politics of EU identity deny or intensify *differences* and plural forms of identification?"[41] She mentions the following critical remarks to the model of EU policy: 1) that it strictly imposes *Western standards*, or precisely, American value system and design for life, which cannot be easily reconciled with more culturally differentiated Europe; 2) the imposed Americanisation of the European pattern of life deprives the European Union of a unique paradigm on the grounds of greater cultural diversification than one present in the USA; 3) hierarchical structure of the EU administration affirms more bureaucratic than democratic government.

Within the given circumstances both individuals and different countries and communities lose their identities. There are many signs of such an assumption:

– members of the EU are obliged to use English in official communication and even in their programmes' documents, which makes a tremendous impact on the change of the native language, in which original words become spoiled when mixed by borrowed English words, and also much impoverished;

– many bodies of the EU administration and its commissions are very often composed of persons from the Central European countries, whom people from the rest of the Union do not consider as their representatives, complaining thus that the EU administration does not understand their problems;

– the result of which is the fact that rich colourful national cultures have been dying under the umbrella of the European Union on the expense of turbo-cultural mass production as a poor copy of original diversified national cultures.[42]

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

37

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

Identity and the request for accommodation

However, when speaking about accommodation to the "New Global World", a more tragic phenomenon, which gives evidence about the lost identity of the original communal ways of life, is described by the anthropologist Wade Davis in his book *Light at the Edge of the World*.[43] The author gives very touching evidence on disappearance of certain tribal societies colonised by Malaysia, while pretending to free them from their backwardness, but, in fact, brutally depriving them of their style of life and cultural identities, and also of lives itself (many people died when they had been removed from their native surroundings – lands, green fields, forests – and been forcibly altered into hired labourers, to what majority could not accommodate). The colonisers cleared the forests, which had been the natural domicile of these people for ages, and displaced the population to the small agley towns although they were nomads. The author remarks that people, who have lived always in peace, having lost their aboriginal identity, have become violent, committing criminal acts and intertribal fights. The evidence showed as well mass death due to hunger, which happened because they could not adopt the new cuisine (with cooked products), while they had been accustomed to natural food (leaves, wild fruits and wild animals). That is why the author writes on *ethnocide* that had been spread amongst the African tribes, demystifying the "emancipatory missions" of Western colonisers.[44]

This is an impressive example of how destructive can a violent change of peoples' cultural identities be, when they are forcibly deprived of their traditional ways of life. But this is not an isolated fact – it has been going on in all colonised (or semi-colonised) countries, which is still a customary practice of the "missions" by Western powerful states.

Very important questions were put forth at the international conference at the University of Copenhagen on the topic "New Global World".[45] As a consequence of the absence, or inadequate pattern of the "New Global World" conception, the imposed model of globalisation has promoted the revival of nationalism "as a defence against a possible loss of identity", according to Peter Duelund's speech. Considering the social and political importance of investigations dealing with the relations of identity with nationalism and cultural policy, the author rises the question: "What type of identity and nation

41

N. Burgi, professor of social sciences at the University of Sorbonne, Paris, in her speech at the International conference in Belgrade in March, 2010.

42

E.g. the vulgar reality shows like "Big Brother", "The Farm", "Survivor" are imposed and became popular in majority of cultures in Europe.

43

W. Davis, *Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures*, Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver 2007. Serbian translation used for quotations: *Svetlost na kraju sveta. Putovanje kroz svet kultura koje nestaju*, Prometej, Novi Sad 2008.

44

Ibid., p. 189.

45

The conference was organized by Peter Duelund, the Dean of Anthropological Department at the University of Copenhagen in May 2009, who opened the debate with the paper "Identity, Nationalism and Cultural Policy in Europe". Interesting topics which have been considered at this conference were, among others: "Multiculturalism – a Subversive Paradigm to Nationalism" (Nils Holtug, University of Copenhagen); "Ideas, Trends and Paradoxes in EU Cultural Policies" (Uffe Ostergaard, University of Copenhagen); "Possible Identity Scenario for the Future of the EU" (John Erik Fossum, University of Oslo). My presentation was dedicated to "Serbian Patterns in Search for a Modern Expression of Identities".

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

38

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

could serve as a foundation for a future development of cultures and socie-
ties within the global community?" According to his answer, perceptions of
national identity are to be reconstructed and changed by cultural policies, i.e.
"National identities may be subject to reinterpretation"; which is to say, that
'national identity' as a reconstructed concept is not synonymous with 'nation-
alism' (which is usually taken for granted within the majority of the Serbian
people).[46]

Europeanisation and a new politics of identity

Contrasting to the concept of a "primordial identity", which is conceived as a
naturally given and unchangeable entity, I treat identity problem as a product
of change within different socio-cultural constellations; e.g. when speaking
about what happened with the pattern of identity after the recent inter-ethnic
wars and the break-up of the ex-Yugoslavia at the end of the past century.
However, contrary to the *ethnic paradigm* rather popular amongst a number
of social scientists in Serbia, who continue with the promotion of "national
identity", I use *cultural paradigm* in order to affirm a new understanding of
nation's belonging, and conceptualise a modern identity feeling in Serbia in
the process of its democratic transformation. I start from the assumption that
a modern conception of Serbian identity cannot rely upon national mytholo-
gies and revival of clerical state, but should be created within a *new politics of
identity*. It implies taking into account a modern value-referential framework
and socio-cultural development, which also change the concept of 'nation',
having been up to this time too narrow and exclusive.

When speaking about a "new politics of identity", it is necessary to intro-
duce the concept of *civil society*, which has profoundly altered the picture
of modern community life and, accordingly, the explanation of the notion of
belonging. In such enlarged space of social life there are more possibilities
for choosing personal and group identity, which are open to re-conceptualisa-
tions; while ethnic identity is an exclusive model imposed by the traditional
way of life, being resistant to change, because inherited collective identity
prevails there without supporting development of the uniqueness of personal
identities.

The traditional model of identity cannot be included into the concept of demo-
cratic change, because it ignores enormous processes during the 20th century
and at the beginning of the new millennium. And in particular, when facing a
global multidimensional crisis, in which *cultural crisis* has been pushed to the
background of the modern life's content within the neoliberal ideology with
its one-dimensional conception of *economism* and over-identification with
the pragmatic/utilitarian norms of a "postmodern" way of life.

However, when culture is reduced either to an exclusive role of political ide-
ology or religion, the original function of culture is lost (which is *eo ipso*
multidimensional and pluralistic). Then it becomes fertile for the expression
of various *fundamentalisms* ("market fundamentalism", religious fundamen-
talism, nationalist fundamentalism, etc.), which is why both individuals and
communities are compelled to constitute their identities on the loyalties to one
or the other kind of fundamentalist ideologies, without being able to make an
independent choice concerning their own personal or collective identities.

Within the so-called postmodern society, it is necessary to reconsider a con-
viction that nation, as an important milieu of identities, is disappearing in
the global world, while nothing else as a concrete form of new identity con-

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

39

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

stellation has been formulated, except an abstract concept of globalisation. It means that a proclaimed *new politics of identity* is to be contested, as Michael Billig did by analysing as an experimental example the "modern matrix" of identity in the USA.[47] The author shows that identity is still national there, because national minorities are still respecting and practicing national/ethnic habits/customs within ethnic communities, although without the wish to separate from the global state, wherein the "melting pot" policy provides co-existence of different nationalities within the American state. But it is without their intercultural influence, for their traditional cultures are allowed in their ethnic "ghettos" (much visible in the phenomenon of "China towns" and alike), having no impact to the dominant "American culture".

In Europe as well an intercultural communication of the members of the European Union has not been achieved, but what is preserved is a peaceful co-existence of ethnic cultures within the new policy of EU integration, and the threat of latent ethnic conflicts is still there.

That was also the reason of disintegration of the ex-Yugoslavia; and such a story is characteristic for the Balkan countries as well, where some so-called small wars on ethnic basis appear from time to time, having produced one of the cruellest war in the 1990s between the republics of the ex-Yugoslavia, because national/separatist movements prevailed over the unity of the multi-national/multi-cultural state. However, the recent evidence proves that various separation movements still continue not only in this part of Europe. And as far as the global world is concerned, one should speak about Asia too, where nationalist separatist movements shake the stability of majority of the states on that continent.

Billig, therefore, denies the thesis that a *transnational culture* has become the new foundation for a modern concept of identity, arguing that "national flags have not been taken down", and "national anthems" still homogenise people within their closer ethnic groups.[48]

One should mention another type of the old-fashioned form of identity as well: that is the model of "authoritarian personality" (Adorno, Horkheimer, Fromm), which is closely linked with the national/ethnic type according to the nature of identity it promotes. And this type of identity, both individual and collective one, which belongs to the "closed society", still persists even in the developed democratic states. Because even there *citizens* exist officially, but not having full rights to behave as *democracy* declares; namely, to be self-conscious and critically-minded beings who should be equal partners in decision-making process. Unless more or less strict subordination of the citizens to the will of powerful states' administration is transcended, the appeal for "new identity" will not be properly formulated and constituted.

In the situation of identity crisis (particularly within the global economic ones) one may explain why people try to find security in the regressive forms of collective identity (revival of extreme nationalism, neo-fascism, religious

---

46
However, Alain Touraine in his book *Un nouveau paradigme. Pour comprendre le monde d'aujourd'hui*, writes about a potential dangerous use of identity when it is reduced to one community alone, be it the nation or religion, because it thus becomes an ideological construction that prevents individual identities and alternative forms of identity (Touraine, *Un nouveau paradigme*, p. 287).

47
See M. Billig, "Postmodern Identity", in: *Banal Nationalism*, Sage Publications, London 1995.

48
Billig's thesis had been discussed at the mentioned conference in Copenhagen where new arguments had been added to the idea that national cultures still prevail in nation-states.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

40

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

fundamentalism, etc.). This is also the reason why the propagated new model
of identity after the year 2000 in Serbia, in terms of "European identity" (it
is not clear what that really means in practice) still does not seem very at-
tractive to the Serbian population: because it is not properly debated how to
integrate Serbian cultural and historical tradition, which had been for a long
time rather different from the Western civilisation, in the EU, or rather, how
to jump from a still patriarchal community, closed in itself, to the European
standards, which are by itself confusing, because they support openness and,
at the same time, command submission to the prescribed global visions and
norms, regardless of the fact that the European countries have passed through
different historical developments before they joined the European Union. In
other words, the solution of conflict between *Euro-centrism* and *ethno-cen-
trism* has not been yet discovered.

One may also explain the story of collapse of the ex-Yugoslavia by its ap-
plication of an inadequate conceptualisation of democratic transition after the
fall of "communism" in 1989, which had still been traditionally based on
national identity. Therefore, the pre-modern tradition and democratic transi-
tion are still in collision, because the concept of *citizenship* has not been deve-
loped as a modern matrix for ethnicity.

At the end, the question arises: what type of identity would be appropriate
for the future advancement of democratic transition in the former socialist
societies? The existing concept of "European identity" does not answer the
question, for it is still an abstract category which does not help reconciliation
of unity and diversification of the involved cultures. It is, therefore, necessary
to search for a new pattern which could provide integration within the free
choice of (individual and collective) identification. That is to say, to define
a new global European world but without neglecting plurality of forms of
cultural identities and citizens' self-identities. Therefore, only an articulated
cultural paradigm promises to open new ways to a really modern "quality of
life", in which a close link would be attained between certain universal value
principles of modern civilisations and plurality forms of individual and col-
lective identities of different nations' cultures.

Literature

Bauman Z. 1997. *Postmodernity and Its Discontents*, Polity Press.

Bauman Z. 1998. *Life in Fragments. Essays in Postmodern Morality*, Basic Blackwell.

Bauman Z. 1998. *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Columbia University Press.

Bauman Z. 2006. *Wasted Lives. Modernity and Its Outcasts*, Polity Press.

Billig M. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*, SAGE Publications.

Bourdieu P. 1984. *Question de sociologie*, Editions du Minuit.

Callhoun C. (ed.) 1994. *Social Theory and Political Identity*, Blackwell.

Castoriadis C. 1977–1986. *Domaines de l'homme – Les Carrefours du labyrinth,* Editions
du Seuil.

Connelly W. E. 1991. *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations and Political Para-
dox*, Cornell University Press.

Cvijić J. 1965. "Dinarski tip" ("Dinaric Type"), in: *Iz društvenih nauka* (*From Social Sci-
ences*), Vuk Karadžić, Beograd.

Cvijić J. 1987. *Balkansko poluostrvo* (*The Balkan Peninsula*), Zavod za izdavanje udžbe-
nika, Beograd.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

41

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

Dvorniković V. 1939. *Karakterologija Jugoslovena* (*Characterology of the Yugoslavians*), Kosmos, Beograd.

Featherston M. (ed.) 1990. *Global Culture. Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, SAGE Publications.

Friedman J. 1994. *Cultural Identity and Global Process*, SAGE.

Fromm E. 1955. *The Fear of Freedom*, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Giddens A. 1993. *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Polity Press.

Golubović Z. 1993. "Antagonism and Identity in Former Yugoslavia", *Journal of Area Studies*, no. 3.

Golubović Z. 1999. *Ja i Drugi* (*The Self and the Others*), Republika.

Golubović Z. & McLean G. (eds.) 1999. *Models of Identities in Postcommunist Societies*, CRV.

Golubović Z. 2006. "Kriza identiteta u svanuće novog milenijuma" ("The Crisis of Iden-
tity at Dawn of the New Millennium"), in: *Pouke i dilema minulog veka* (*Lessons and Dilemmas of the Last Century*), Filip Višnjić.

Habermas J. 1979. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, Heinemann.

Konstatinović R. 1981. *Filozofija palanke*, Nolit, Beograd.

Kopić M. 2010. *Sekstant. Skice o duhovnim temeljima svijeta* (*Sextant. Notes on the Spi-
ritual Foundations of the World*), Službeni glasnik.

Kymlicka W. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship*, Clarendon Press.

Lyotard F. 1995/1996. "Prava drugog" ("The Rights of the Other"), *Beogradski krug*, no. 3–4/1–2.

MacLennan G. 1995. *Pluralism*, Open University Press.

Marcuse H. 1966. *One-dimensional Man*, Beacon Press.

Mead G. H. 1952. *Mind, Self and Society*, University of California Press.

Melluci A. 1995. "The Process of Collective Identity", in: Johnston H. & Klandermans B. (eds.) *Social Movements and Culture*, University of Minnesota Press.

Mittelman H. J. 1996. *Globalization: Critical Reflections*, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Moïsi D. 2009. "Globalization, Identity and Emotions", in: *The Geopolitics of Emotion*, The Bodley Head.

Mucchielli A. 1983. *L'identité*, PUF.

Offe C. 1996. *Modernity and the State: East, West*, Polity Press.

Piaget J. 1970. *L'épistemologie génétique*, PUF.

Preston P. 1997. *Political/Cultural Identity. Citizens and Nations in a Global Era*, SAGE.

Riesman D. 1961. *The Lonely Crowd*, Yale University Press.

Smith A. 1991. *National Identity*, Penguin Books.

Scott A. (ed.) 1997. *The Limits of Globalisation. Cases and Arguments*, Routledge.

Tapp P. (ed.) 1986. *Idéntité individuelle et personalisation,* Science de l'homme.

Taylor Ch. 1992. *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University Press.

Touraine A. 2005. *Un nouveau paradigme. Pour comprendre le monde aujourd'hui*, Fayard.

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

42

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

Vattimo G. 2003. *Nichilismo ed Emancipazione. Etica, politica, dritto*, Garzanti libri.

Vujadinović D. et al. 2005. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy. Civil Society and Political Culture*, CEDET.

Wright Mills C. 1959. *Sociological Imagination*, Penguin Books.

Zakaria F. 2003. *The Future of Freedom*, W.W. Norton.

Zagorka Golubović

Antropološko poimanje identiteta

Sažetak

Potreba za antropološkim pristupom pojmu identiteta javlja se zbog prirode kako osobnog tako i kolektivnog identiteta, budući da nije riječ o fenomenima koji su »prirodno dani«, već o kulturno definiranim i konstituiranim formama ljudskog života u kulturnoj sredini kao »drugoj prirodi«, koja na ljudski način uvjetuje i konceptualizira različite »načine života« pojedinaca i naroda. Budući da kultura predstavlja bitan kontekst ljudskog socijalnog i individualnog života, ona osigurava obrazac zajedničkog načina života i načina mišljenja kolektivnog iskustva, kao vrijednosno-referentni okvir na koji se oslanjaju definicije i interpretacije identiteta. Stoga kulturna paradigma omogućuje istraživačima da razumiju što znači identitet (personalni i kolektivni) u različitim društveno-povijesnim uvjetima i ideološkim konotacijama, pretpostavljajući dinamičan koncept nasuprot nacionalnog obrasca identiteta koji se vezuje za etničke grupe i postaje ekskluzivan te isključuje mogućnost promjene. U tekstu će se razmatrati i tradicionalno orijentirana konceptualizacija identiteta u Srbiji i njen utjecaj na sporost promjena u demokratskoj tranziciji u novom tisućljeću i ukazati na probleme i dileme u tom kontekstu.

Ključne riječi

antropološka interpretacija identiteta, identitet kao biološka kategorija, identifikacija, individualizacija, pluralnost identiteta

Zagorka Golubović

Anthropologische Auffassung der Identität

Zusammenfassung

Der anthropologische Ansatz zum Identitätskonzept wird benötigt, da die „Identität" (sei sie persönlich oder kollektiv) nicht von Natur aus „gegeben" ist, sondern für Menschenwesen kulturell definiert und konstituiert ist, die in dem kulturellen Rahmen als der „anderen Natur des Menschen" leben; so existieren sie menschlich bedingt und konzeptualisiert in verschiedenerlei „menschlichen Lebensarten". Diese Kultur zu durchleben bildet den essenziellen Kontext des Soziallebens wie auch der Persönlichkeitsgründung, es liefert die Muster der gemeinschaftlichen Lebens- und Denkweise der kollektiven Erfahrung, und zwar als wertmäßig-referenzielles Gerüst, woran sich die Definitionen und Interpretationen der Identitäten anlehnen. Aufgrund dessen befähigt das kulturelle Paradigma die Erforscher zum Verständnis, welche Identität (kollektive oder persönliche) sich in diversen sozialhistorischen Gegebenheiten sowie ideologischen Konnotationen offenbart, vorausgesetzt, dass dieses Konzept im Vergleich zum anderen dynamisch ist, wie zum nationalen Identitätsentwurf, welcher sowohl begrenzt als auch abschließend wirkt und als statische Kategorie keinerlei Änderungsmöglichkeiten duldet. In dem Artikel wird ebenso die traditionell ausgerichtete Identitätskonzeptualisierung in Serbien behandelt und ihre Einwirkung auf die Wandelträgheit innerhalb der demokratischen Transition im neuen Millennium.

Schlüsselwörter

anthropologische Interpretation der Identität, Identität als biologische Kategorie, Identifikation, Individualisation, Pluralität der Identitäten

SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA
51 (1/2011) pp. (25–43)

43

Z. Golubović, An Anthropological Concep-
tualisation of Identity

Zagorka Golubović

Une conceptualisation anthropologique de l'identité

Résumé

La nécessité d'une approche anthropologique du concept d'identité provient de la nature de l'identité, qu'elle soit personnelle ou collective, qui n'est pas un phénomène « donné naturelle-ment », mais une forme, culturellement définie et construite, de la vie humaine dans un milieu culturel en tant que « seconde nature » ; celle-ci conditionne et conceptualise humainement les différents « modes de vie » des individus et des peuples. Étant donné que la culture représente le contexte essentiel de la vie sociale et individuelle de l'homme, elle fournit un modèle pour un mode de vie et de pensée commun de l'expérience collective, comme cadre des valeurs de réfé-rence sur lequel s'appuient les définitions et les interprétations de l'identité. Ainsi, le paradigme culturel permet aux chercheurs de comprendre ce que signifie l'identité (personnelle et collec-tive) dans des conditions socio-historiques et des connotations idéologiques différentes, en as-sumant un concept dynamique inverse du modèle national d'identité, qui lui est lié aux groupes ethniques et exclut la possibilité du changement. Le texte traitera également de la conceptua-lisation, orientée traditionnellement, de l'identité en Serbie, ainsi que de son influence sur la lenteur des changements dans la transition démocratique en ce nouveau millénaire.

Mots-clés

interprétation anthropologique de l'identité, identité en tant que catégorie biologique, identification, individualisation, pluralité des identités