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## **From National to Global Identity. Globalization Versus Patriotic and Civil Attitudes of Contemporary Youth**

### **Abstract**

Complex issues of the identity of contemporary youth, their axiological preferences and their self-defining in relation to other people and their own country have been undertaken in this article. Theoretical assumptions associated with globalization and shaping the youth's patriotic and civil attitudes constitute the basis for research which aims at specifying: (1) the values appreciated by learners from final classes of upper-secondary schools as significant determiners of their feeling of identity, (2) the relation between global culture and forming the youth's patriotic attitudes and their identification with their homeland, (3) the relation between the consumer society and the youth's readiness to undertake civil activity and to sacrifice personal interests for others.

**Key words:** *national identity, global identity, globalization, youth, patriotic attitude, civil attitude.*

### **Introduction**

*"We may be approaching such a new and different world that the experiences of history so far will turn insufficient to understand it and to be able to move in it. [...] This is the world which has potentialities to give a lot but also to demand a lot, the world in which easy shortcuts often lead to nowhere. We will constantly meet a new Other who will slowly start to emerge from the chaos and confusion of modern times. This Other might come into existence through the confrontation of two opposing*

*currents constituting the culture of the modern world – the current which globalizes our reality and the current which preserves our distinctness, our differences and our uniqueness. And that the Other will be their offspring and heir. We should search for dialogue with him and understanding. [...] Only well-wishing towards other beings is the foundation which can move the nerve of humanity in them. [...] The world needs re-thinking”.*

This apt remark of Ryszard Kapuściński has become a motto of the undertaken discussion concerning the complex issues of the identity of contemporary youth, their axiological preferences and their self-defining in relation to other people and their own country. The state transformation, initiated in 1989 in Poland, brought about numerous fundamental changes in the socio-cultural area and in individuals' systems of values. It also changed behaviour patterns. The promise of radical changes in economy intensified optimism of many people – people expected “glamorous” future resulting from re-structuring of the state economy and introducing free market mechanisms. Reality verified the expectations – fast financial success of some people was accompanied by stagnation or even degradation of others, the problem of unemployment appeared, as well as the politicians' lack of interest in ordinary people's problems (Brzeziński, Witkowski, 1994; Kurczewska, 1999; Marody, 2004; Radziejewicz-Winnicki, 2004; Ziółkowski, 2000).

After the relatively violent period of proceeding from real socialism to real democracy, contemporary youth are continuing social transformations, taking part in them and partially shaping them. The way young people perceive the state and society and the changes occurring in them, which criteria they follow while evaluating, how they would like to build their own and social life, what is worth imitating and what is definitely rejected – they all are mainly influenced by different currents and trends of thought which clash in the environments where the young exist, learn, or work.

With the complexity of globalization processes which constitute “the inevitable destiny of the world”, some significant questions appear, especially from the point of view of the young generations' education: What do the youth's axiological preferences look like several years after the political and socio-cultural breakthrough? Are the young more conscious of and sensitive to values or are they sceptical – with no orientation and no perspectives for the future in our country? Is the young person's application of already formed identity a result of mass culture or of rather lesser confidence in older generations, which may be associated with the lack of moral and political authority? Will there be, in the young people's opinion, room for national states in the world which is becoming “a global village”? Will the existence in the consumer society phase out the youth's need for undertaking civil

activity? Will Internet communication technologies threaten direct interpersonal relations?

Showing the relation between globalization processes and patriotic and civil attitudes of contemporary youth – in the context of the search for the answers to the above-mentioned questions – can substantially contribute to a better orientation in the awareness of the young in Poland and to a better understanding of their needs, aims and life ambitions. This, in turn, seems to enrich educational experience collected so far in this field.

### **National identity in the time of global culture shaping**

As a result of the current globalization processes, a state of cultural discontinuity (often referred to as “the weakening of culture”) appears and is often manifested in the relative nature of individuals’ social identities and the accepted values and norms. This state is to substitute the new social order which is understood as “the multitude of overlapping and intersecting socio-spatial nets of relations of power” (Kempny, 2000, pp. 12–13; Bernardi, 1998, pp. 275–283; Kłoskowska, 2002) and which allows for the differentiation of cultures at the same time. What is also formulated is the concept of man as a multidimensional, not homogeneous, creature who exists “simultaneously on the foundations of two general laws: of antinomy (heteronomy and autonomy) and of homonomy. The law of heteronomy involves the social dimension of man, the law of autonomy – the biological and subject-oriented dimension, and the law of homonomy – the metaphysical dimension” (Stas-Romanowska, 1999, p. 122).

The possibility of leading the individual into social and cultural life is mainly associated with the effectiveness of socialization processes. On the one hand, they are interpreted as the transfer of social structure qualities into individual properties (society is a source of knowledge which should be reflected in the individual). On the other hand, what is emphasized is that man is not a passive recipient in the socialization process and cannot be described merely as a derivative of society. Human individuality and uniqueness are the reason for “creative notions”, which in turn bring about social transformations (Czerniawska, 2000, p. 55). These processes involve the shaping of national identity, which is associated with the natural feeling of belonging to a particular social group (including national and cultural one) and which enables self-identification – the basis for the differentiation between I – We and Others – They. In accordance with the standpoint of many researchers of identity issues, it needs to be highlighted that although identity is a dynamic

whole, “certain types of identification which constitute individual identity are intrinsically connected with permanence, invariability. Undoubtedly, one of such identifications is the national one – it can be hardly subjected to negotiations and is evaluated in ethical and moral categories. The consequences of changes within this identification are painful for the individual and they demand undertaking special effort of negotiating the identity in order to preserve its continuity and the feeling of «being faithful to oneself»” (Michna, 2004, p. 27).

As Zbigniew Bokszański remarks, the structure of the changeability of national identity concepts is predominantly marked by the ways the basic constituents of this identity are perceived. These are: (1) the ways in which the notion of identity is interpreted, and (2) the ways in which the nation is understood. Regardless of different approaches to national identity determined by theoretical solutions in these two platforms, its two basic aspects can be indicated – continuation, associated with maintaining the continuity and permanence, the canon reproduced in the consciousness of subsequent generations, and separateness – which enables to differentiate between the individual or group subject and other individuals or groups (Bokszański, 2005, p. 109).

Numerous concepts of national identity presented by the studies in sociology, history, social psychology and political sciences allow for distinguishing four models:

- objectivist model – according to which national identity is expressed in the qualities of national collectivity that can be described by an outside observer in an objective way (these are, for instance, historical territory or homeland, common culture, common and legally specified rights and duties of all members);
- model of identities which are being discovered – based on the bonds of cultural commonwealth and cultural unity (language, tradition, religion, values, social relations, education, particular lifestyle), which at the same time form a special cultural “style” of a particular national collectivity;
- model of national identity which is being constructed – assuming that national identity does not derive from national culture which was formed in the course of historical process, but is the characteristic of collectiveness constructed at different historic moments for different goals and its qualities depend on functions which it should fulfill;
- model of public opinion – taking into account “individualizing” interpretation of the notion of national identity, which means referring to empirical studies, knowledge, attitudes and opinions of individual members of national collectiveness concerning this collectiveness (Bokszański, 2005, pp. 114–135).

What attracts due attention in the distinguished approaches which analyze national identity is the fact that it seems to be a relatively stable structure. The relationship with the national group is built on the values accepted by the individual and on features which form the self-concept of the individual. Thus, the feeling of this relationship with the national group seems to be fairly strong. Currently – in the opposition to the stable feeling of national identity – such phenomena appear as isolation and immigration. They determine two developmental tendencies of the world – globalization and disintegration of nations (falling apart of states). The second tendency, in the opinion of sociologists, is a response to the first, which is characterized by the structures of information, production, exchange, consumption and entertainment. What becomes significant is the so-called identity policy (Kempny, 2004, pp. 179–200), manifested in separateness, differentiation between us and aliens, friends and enemies, which often leads to nationalism. As the researchers exploring these issues emphasize, the international situation is determined by many different, often contradictory, factors. The breakdown of both the cold war system and the world partition into competing blocks brought about an abundance of attitudes and aspects of modern life. Faced with such a variety, researchers point at the difficulty in introducing international order, characterized by predictable conditions and events and the broadly understood feeling of safety. “All concordantly emphasize that international community faces new challenges which require new abilities and contents in solving global, regional and local problems” (Artymiak, 2003, p. 69).

### **“New disorder of the world” and global identity shaping**

Marian Kempny states that two major currents of reflection prevail in thinking about the modern world and globalization effects. The first – economism – refers to the world capitalism and economic transformations, the second – culturalism – focuses on cultural changes. Economism is a natural and inevitable process resulting from modernization, in other words from strengthening the foundation of the capitalist system (Kempny, 2001, pp. 79–101). Globalization processes understood in this way should bring about the birth of global community, the so-called homogenization of national states. Their borders would become less distinct and in turn this should contribute to the creation of supranational structures of organization. The opposite current seems to be the domain of the supporters of hybridization. “For them, copying some patterns present in the Western culture means not a symptom of subordinating local particularism to universal processes,

but rather of the domination of a particular form of social life over others” (Gilarek, 2003, p. 62). Thus, in this approach the unification of societies will take place in the context of culture. For the representatives of this trend, cultural factors, autonomous in relation to economy and politics, are the factors which determine the dynamics of the new world order.

Integration and fragmentation are assumed to be opposing concepts. However, there are approaches which combine the elements of both economism and culturalism, presenting integration and fragmentation as two complementary processes. Globalization consists neither in the integration of societies into something like a superpower state nor in the re-birth of particularisms as a local response to global processes. The dynamics of the contemporary world results from the influence of both processes on each other, which occurs in a selective way with regard to areas of life (they concern particular societies) and to regions (where they appear) (Gilarek, 2003). What can be an example of such an approach is Roland Robertson's concept of glocalization, continued also by Zygmunt Bauman, the heart of which concerns restructuring of the social world according to both new principles of re-stratification and the worldwide hierarchy which is constantly reborn.

### **“What is happening to all of us” or globalization according to Zygmunt Bauman**

Globalization processes determine the shrinking of time and space, which means they touch all the dimensions of human condition and trigger off various transformations. Still Z. Bauman indicates the lack of assumed homogeneity. “Globalization divides and unites to the same degree, and the reasons for the divided world are the same as the factors which stimulate its unifying” (Bauman, 2000, p. 6).

Facing the occurring transformations makes mobility and the freedom of moving around the most demanded value. Thus, globalization concerns a semantically broad space which includes the features, processes, actions, effects, threats and phenomena belonging to the core of the surrounding reality. These phenomena influence non-global areas. As Z. Bauman indicates the increasing polarization of society seems to be a globalization marker. Currently, the difference between people consists in what abilities they have to move about, thus, to decide about the world vicissitudes.

In Z. Bauman's opinion, shrinking of time and space, the disappearance of public space, ex-territorial nature of elites, and staying in one place bring about disability and the feeling of incomplete humanity. This is associated with the inability to

constitute norms and to form communities which are internally consolidated by common evaluation criteria. This occurs because people have no place, their own agora, where they could meet and share observations as a different agora and forum, following the example of elites, separated from local ties.

Thus, a question arises: For whom does globalization take place? Its effects concern all people but the profits seem to be gained only by the richest, who owing to globalization will become even richer, in contrast to the rest of society, whose difficult situation will deteriorate even more. Social stratification will deepen in this way. As the prominent sociologist claims “what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, appropriate or inappropriate, useful or useless, is decided only on the top, where only the most penetrating sight can reach. The judgments from the top are unquestionable as no sensible doubts can be directed to judges who left no address, even no electronic mail, to which these doubts could be passed” (Bauman, 2000, p. 34).

Stratification of societies influences the arrangement of urban space. Public areas of limited availability, electronically controlled doors, residential areas for rich elites guarded by security are all built in order to isolate from unwelcome co-citizens of the town. Defence walls are not built around towns any longer, they cross-cut it in all directions. The problem starts to appear also in our country, in spite of noticeable differences in the pace of development between Poland and Western societies. This means that certain re-valuing is taking place and the world lacks common aims to head for. “In its deepest sense, the notion of globalization conveys the indefinite, capricious and autonomic nature of the world and its issues, the lack of the centre, as well as the lack of the operator’s keyboard, the board of directors and their office. Globalization is another name for »the new disorder of the world«” (Bauman, 2000, p.71). The term “universality” as if fell out of this notion as it comprises order, aim and hope.

Globalization, or what is happening to all of us leads to reflection upon forming new identity the name of which derives from the name of the process – global identity. Whereas the issues of national identity (despite their inner complexity) often appear in expert literature in a convergent way, the standpoints concerning global identity forming seem to be polarized at two extremes of the continuum. The views of the authors discussing reality and predicting possible changes are different as they result from different assumptions. However, undertaking the problems of the new identity shaping or of creating a global society indicates that in spite of various views the researchers are united in the common belief that globalization processes seem to be not without influence on modern societies.

In this context, another question can be raised: Will the values and traditions constituting identities of particular nations become vague in the process of con-



structuring a universal set of rules? In one of her works Magdalena Grygierek puts forward an interesting thesis that a strong feeling of identity (brought about by deep rooting in home tradition) gives birth to openness which leads to universalism. The author points out that universalism and homeliness are not antagonists; on the contrary, they use common experience and uncover the abundance of human attitudes. "Authentic and living cultures offer opportunities for a better understanding of universal truths. Aiming at universalism in new reality is not a caprice but necessity. It gives a chance for conflict-free and fruitful encounter with others. While progressing towards universalism, it is important not to abandon one's own traditions. Rooting in a local, ethnic culture enables the application of universal values and, at the same time, protects individuals against blurring their identity" (Grygierek, 2001, p. 232).

"The new disorder of the world", which concerns all of us, also affects a very important sphere of education. Numerous transformations taking place now and their complexity necessitate changes in the field of education. It is school and teachers that are to play a prominent role of 'ordering' the changing reality. This role can be understood as the necessity to read basic values anew because "the constantly progressing worldwide globalization is associated with broadly understood educational processes which are indispensable for authentic and human-based globalization. Thus, it is education which has the task to protect identities of individuals, societies and nations from unwanted and illusive unification and its effects through referring to such values as: truth, responsibility, freedom, tolerance, and human dignity" (Ostrowska, Tchorzewski, 2002, p. 27).

The theoretical assumptions applied in this article, which refer to globalization and shaping patriotic and civil attitudes of contemporary youth, became the basis for research activities aiming at specifying:

- the values appreciated by learners from the final forms of upper-secondary schools as significant markers of their feeling of identity,
- the relation between global culture and both shaping young people's patriotic attitudes and their identification with their own country,
- the relation between the consumer society and the youth's readiness to undertake civil activity and to devote personal interest to others.

252 learners (112 girls and 140 boys) from the final forms of upper-secondary school took part in the studies carried out in Cieszyn Silesia in 2007. 110 of them attended general secondary schools, 68 technical schools, and 74 a vocational school. The research comprised parents as well – 125 mothers and 18 fathers. Altogether the studies were conducted on 395 people. The choice of particular types of schools, the number and structure of the respondents do not constitute

a representative sample; however, they allow for capturing certain tendencies in the discussed issues.

The empirical data was collected by the methods of talk and interview, questionnaire, and verbal techniques of completing unfinished sentences which were to examine valuation judgments expressed by the youth.

## **Values appreciated by the youth from Cieszyn Silesia**

Axiological preferences were established through an analysis of Scheler's Value Scale (SVS)<sup>1</sup>, which enables to assess the significance of particular values and their categories (groups) and to compare them with Scheler's model hierarchy. Each of the 50 values in SVS is evaluated independently from others on a 101 point evaluation scale. Referring rough results to sten norms allowed both to outline the profiles of values accepted by learners and to specify how much they appreciate particular values in comparison to the norm group.

Characterizations of the values appreciated by the youth from various types of upper-secondary schools were based on the analysis of descriptive statistics and were intended to be compared and to elicit the similarities and differences in axiological preferences of the respondents. The data in Figure 1 and 2 present the process of shaping axiological predispositions of young Poles, which is characteristic of periods of social breakthrough. The lack of evident domination in the system of values and distinct flatness of their whole structure may suggest that the young are not

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<sup>1</sup> Scheler's Value Scale (SVS) consists of 50 values which constitute 6 basic scales comprising the following values: /H/ Hedonistic (prosperous life, erotic love, possessing, pleasure, joy of life, comfort, rest, exciting life); /V/ Vital (resistance to fatigue, physical strength, fitness, body nimbleness, ability to endure cold, ability to endure hunger). /E/ Esthetic (elegance, taste, harmony, order of things, right proportions of shapes, regularity of outlines, good organization); /T/ Truth (intelligence, logic, wisdom, objectivity, open mind, understanding, broad mind limits, knowledge); /M/ Moral (kind-heartedness, honour, love to others, peace, helping others, truthfulness, reliability, frankness, honesty, kindness, friendliness); /H/ Holy (God, country, independence, homeland, state, patriotism, faith, redemption, eternal life). Apart from basic scales, 4 factor sub-scales were distinguished in statistical analyses. The sub-scale of Vital values forms two factor sub-scales: /FPS/ Fitness and Physical Strength (physical strength, fitness, body nimbleness) and /End./ Endurance (resistance to fatigue, ability to endure cold, ability to endure hunger). The sub-scale of Holy values also forms two factor sub-scales: /LS/ Lay Sanctities (country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism) and /RS/ Religious Sanctities (God, faith, redemption, eternal life). Quoted in: P. Brzozowski: *Skala Wartości Schelerowskich* – SWS. *Podręcznik*. Warszawa 1995, Wyd. Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych, pp. 14–15.

convinced yet what is important in their lives – the evaluations of values consecutive in ranking are spaced with small distances, so they can change places.

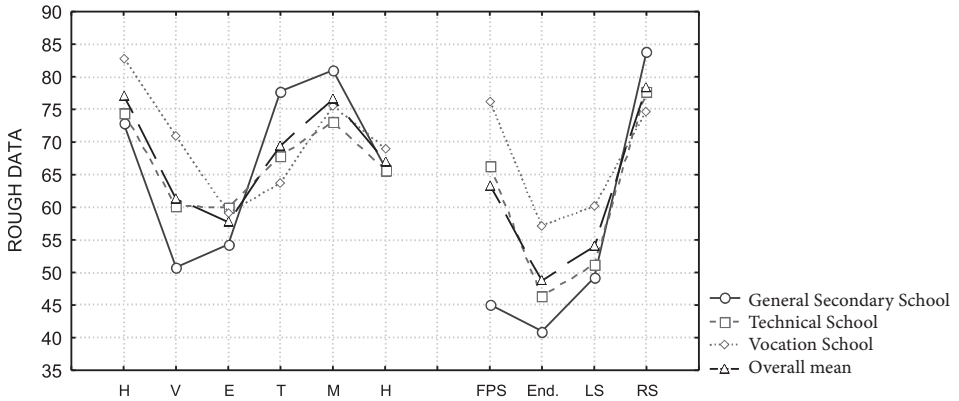
Pupils reaching adolescence approve of these which affirm pleasure values. This surely results from socio-cultural transformations occurring in our country and the processes associated with them: European integration, globalization, easy access to various goods, free market economy, and also the change in the style in which parents bring up their children. In modern political and economic environment, permissive family up-bringing is developing further and more intensely than in the teenage years of the examined pupils' parents. Learners who finish the upper-secondary stage of education know that it is worth indulging in joys of life and they do not mean to abandon this chance. Pointing at the relation between the contemporary cultural crisis and the crisis of orientation and the ability to evaluate, Wolfgang Brezinka states that in an air of over-abundance of excitement, fast cultural changes, and the disappearance of what is durable and supportive, people feel free to choose from a real multitude of material goods, interpersonal contact, lifestyles, various information and beliefs; but on the other hand, they have little support in right habits and reliable ethic traditions which explain reality.

Broadening the scope of liberties is not only a kind of gain but also burden for the individual (due to too strict demands) and threat for the community (Brezinka, 2005, pp. 21–24). Thus, a fully justified question arises whether the new political and socio-cultural reality generates young people's consumption-oriented attitudes and transforms their identity in this way.

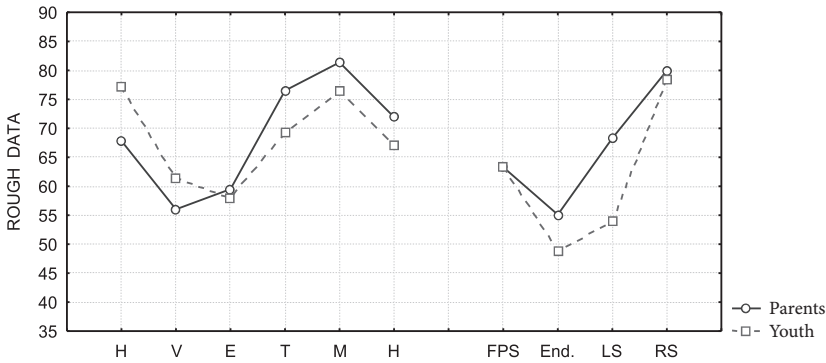
Moral values rank as the second in the group of values in the basic sub-scales. Nevertheless, the minimal difference between the arithmetic mean of the evaluation results of the hedonistic values and moral ones may indicate that both groups of values are equally important to the young. They wish they could enjoy a life full of excitement, they appreciate comfort, rest, pleasure, erotic love, and wealth. However, the young intend to guide their own development taking into account the set of basic moral rules, such as: kind-heartedness, honour, love to others, peace, helping others, truthfulness, reliability, frankness, honesty, kindness or friendliness.

All the respondents appreciate the values of truth fairly high (the third in rank). A higher position of this group of values, in comparison to the results of the 1995–2003 studies (Szymański, 2000; Świda-Ziemia, 2000, 2005), can be interpreted as the youth's getting aware of the role of knowledge and education in the conditions of the free market economy. The young realize that the quality of their qualifications determines their life chances – their future profession, job, position, living standards, and the fulfillment of their own aims and life goals.

**Figure 1. Profiles of values appreciated by youth**  
(rough data – basic scales and factor sub-scales)



**Figure 2. Profiles of values appreciated by youth and parents**  
(rough data – basic scales and factor sub-scales)



**BASIC SCALES FACTOR SUB-SCALES**

- H – sub-scale of hedonistic values
- V – sub-scale of vital values
- E – sub-scale of esthetic values
- T – sub-scale of truth values
- M – sub-scale of moral values
- H – sub-scale of holy values
- FPS – sub-scale of fitness and physical strength
- End. – sub-scale of endurance
- LS – sub-scale of lay sanctities
- RS – sub-scale of religious sanctities

The low evaluation of the holy values (the fourth in rank) resulted from a significant difference in the evaluation of both factor sub-scales into which the holy values are divided. That is why it seems indispensable to consider the research results in both factor-scales separately.

- The religious sanctities gained in the youth's declarations the highest evaluation mean out of all the examined groups of values (78.5). For nearly half of the respondents (47.5%), the highest value (with maximum score) among the 50 values included in Scheler's Value Scale is God. The rest of the respondents, who describe their attitude to religion as "not practising believer" or "not declared in religious issues", highly appreciated other values in this sub-scale – eternal life and redemption.

Although in the questionnaire studies the youth's attitude to faith, religion and God was unambiguously expressed in the highest evaluations, young people's opinions on the role of religion and Church in their life were rather moderate, or even partially contradictory. Some respondents confirm the phenomenon of weakening religiousness in Poland, others highlight a refreshing stir in searching for and discovering new symbols of faith. 15.6% of the examined youth think that the return to God, re-discovering Him, does not necessarily mean the return to the Catholic, Evangelical or other Churches (Kozłowski, Langer, Zagajewski, 1989; Otczyk, 1991)<sup>2</sup>. The institutional renaissance of religion is manifested not only by the comeback to traditional forms of piety, but also by the pluralism of religious life, a symptom of which is the birth of new religious movements (sects and cults). Among the respondents, 8% declared attempting contact with other religious groups and taking part in their meetings. In the opinion of the young in Cieszyn Silesia (91%), religion is a private matter of every person. Thus, it does not mark the whole of the attitude to the world, as occurs in traditional societies, but becomes a section of the individual's experience. In this way, religion and religiousness more often become the values chosen individually (personally) and they lose in rank as values "inherited" only through "being" a member of a particular family or socio-cultural community (Babiński, 1999, pp. 197–211; Mariański, 1997, p. 135).

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<sup>2</sup> In the Polish part of Cieszyn Silesia there are 11 officially registered churches and denominations: Roman-Catholic Church, Evangelical-Lutheran Church, Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Christians of Saturday Church, Methodist Church, Polish-Catholic Church, Free Christians' Congregation, Polish Christian Baptist Church, Polish Association of Jehovah's Witnesses Church (or Strażnica – Bible and Treaty Society), Whitsunday Church and Evangelical Congregation "Zion".

- Lay sanctities, as a factor sub-scale of the holy values, were evaluated relatively low by the respondents (53.4 points), which resulted in a lowered rank of the basic sub-scale in relation to others in the main group. Values such as: country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism, seem to have small significance for the young generation. However, it can be assumed that the absence of the patriotic attitude in the examined pupils' declarations may be associated with no threat to our country's sovereignty. The youth's attitude to being a Polish was specified in more detail in the results of the questionnaire research, in which the respondents were asked the following questions:
  - Is there a place (country, town, village) where you would like to live and work? If yes, give the name of such a place/places.
  - Do you think you know the problems of Poland, its inhabitants, culture, history, in the following degree: a) very high, b) high, c) medium, d) low, e) none (I am not interested in the country's problems)
  - Do you wish that Europe became a continent without borders between countries and with free circulation of people and the creations of their thoughts?

60% of the pupils taking part in the studies declared to live in Poland and to shape their future in our country's conditions. The remaining respondents do not only plan to go abroad but they are also preparing for leaving the country (they look through education and work offers abroad, learn foreign languages in a systematic way, etc.). In the young people's opinion, the most attractive countries for migration are: Germany, the USA, Holland, Australia and New Zealand, Italy, Austria and Spain. Asked for the reasons for their future going abroad, the pupils mention three main ones: no employment perspectives, low salaries, and no possibility to acquire high qualifications.

Merely 2.8% of the respondents know the problems of their country, its inhabitants, culture and history of the homeland in a very high degree, 28.7% in a high and 43.7% in a medium degree. For the remaining group (24.8%) these issues have no significance in their life.

United Europe and free international contacts are described unambiguously by the young as "no borders". 67.5% of young Poles think about the common (or "new") great "homeland", 20% have no opinion yet, and 12.5% of the pupils are dissatisfied with the accession of Poland to the European Union.

The lowest ranks in the studies were given to the vital and esthetic values. This seems to be a foreseeable consequence of the tendency (observed over the recent years) to push physical and art education into secondary position in the process

of education – a gradual decrease in the number of lessons of these subject and the lack of organizations and interest clubs in these fields in the out-of-school system. The young, especially upper-secondary school learners, do not value fitness and physical strength much, neither do they feel the need for the order of things, elegance or harmony.

The presented characterization of the values appreciated by the upper-secondary school learners from final grades (as regards the significance of particular categories of values) allows for an attempt to specify most important qualities of learners' axiological preferences:

- in the area of the lower values (hedonistic, vital, esthetic) axiological orientations of the respondents mostly aim at fulfilling pleasure (hedonistic), material, individual and private (autotelic) values, which enable comfortable life oriented only towards one's own self; however, social and cultural values, which are important markers and determiners of behaviour patterns have much smaller significance – thus an evident orientation appears towards fulfilling selected private values to find both the sense of one's life and one's identity. Esthetic values rank particularly low in the ordering structure – the respondents did not feel the need to fulfill and implement them;
- the truth and moral values occupy an appropriate place in the structure (concordantly with the objectivistic approach to the values represented by Max Scheler's phenomenological concept), which confirms their universal nature;
- clear re-valuing occurred in the religious values – the religiousness of the examined youth (concordantly with James W. Fowler's concept of faith model) is at the synthetic-conventional stage, which emphasizes an interpersonal character of faith, and at the individual-reflective stage, associated with the emerging self-consciousness of a young person concerning the relativity of the inherited religious standpoint and with rejection of the so far recognized authorities (Socha, 2000, pp. 165–189; Bagrowicz, 2000, pp. 86–100). Such a situation brings about both an increasingly critical approach to almost all the areas of life in which a growing-up individual functions and developing an ability to reflect upon one's own identity and ideology;
- a kind of crisis affects the values of the lay sanctities (e.g. country, nation, independence, homeland, state, patriotism). In the respondents' social consciousness, these values stopped being significant elements and basic mechanisms which consolidate both particular social groups and Polish society. Thus, an evident tendency appears towards the search for a new semantic formula (on the language and symbol layers) of this value group

in the context of the occurring social and cultural transformations of our country, Europe and the whole world.

### **Global culture and forming the young people's patriotic attitudes and the identification with their own country**

Globalization processes take place worldwide and they change the way "we" and "others" are thought of. The processes concern all of us and their effects are still unpredictable. Globalization has three distinctive features: general consuming, temporariness and instantaneousness. In the instant type of culture "the media constantly flood us with information from which a young person often cannot protect, and in addition, certain values lose their significance as a result of fast changes and disappearing reference systems in the form of stable notions, tradition, categories, theories and other similar ones" (Nikitorowicz, 2005, p. 80).

How do globalization processes affect patriotism? Patriotism, which (as Jan Nowak-Jeziorański claims) "is a feeling of love that can be in fact compared to family love, to bonds with the nearest; however, of course, it is far broader and comprises not only the group of the closest contemporaries, but also the whole huge community who inhabit the same land. Moreover, its significance is much bigger than that of any other human feeling as it reaches the past and the future. This community includes not only people who live now, but also all the previous and future generations. This is a dimension which goes beyond one person's life" (Nowak-Jeziorański, 2006, p.25).

Thus, is there a relation between globalization processes and shaping patriotic attitudes of the examined youth in the Cieszyn area of Silesia?

The analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire research results allow for stating that almost three quarters of the respondents feel to be patriots and are ready to defend their country if it is in danger. 28% of the answers indicate the learners' lack of patriotism, as they explain they *do not feel any spiritual relation with their country, there are no chances for normal life in Poland, there is far too much corruption*. A significant majority of such responses appeared in the answers of the pupils from technical schools. The relatively fewest negative attitudes to homeland emerged from the answers of the grammar school pupils. 39% of them described their attitude to the homeland as clearly positive and it was this group of young people who were most interested in the matters concerning their country. At the same time, mainly they were also against the disappearance of borders, which confirmed their ties with Poland. The greatest supporters of the idea of



disappearing borders were the young from vocational schools and they also felt the smallest possibility of their influence on the functioning of the state.

The examined people, regardless of the type of the upper-secondary school they attended, also presented a feeling of very scarce possibility to influence social matters – this reaches the level of 18%.

The technical school pupils' negative attitudes to their own country were confirmed by their responses in the incomplete sentences test. For this group, Poland appears to be a dishonest country offering no prospects for future normal life. Such a frustration was present in all responses but was the most transparent among the learners from technical schools. In the questionnaire responses, there were some positively-loaded expressions (e.g.: my country is beautiful, it is my asylum); however, they constituted a hardly perceivable percentage. What seems most important is that the pupils indicated the necessity of changes in our state and the uncertain future associated with the shortage of jobs and low salaries.

In 2001–2004, the CBOS also carried out studies concerning the feeling of national pride and self-identification of Poles. The research showed that, for over half of the Poles, the basic reference group is the local community. Every fifth respondent identifies with the whole country, and every seventh with the region. Only 3% of the Poles felt ties with Europe.

The question “Are you proud of being Polish?” was answered positively by 73% in 1994, by 63% in 2003, and only 54% in 2004. The prevailing part of the respondents who declared national pride were elderly people over 55 old with primary education and the inhabitants of villages and small towns with the population under 20 thousand. The lack of national pride is most often declared by young people with secondary and higher education who live in medium-size and big towns. As the comparative analysis of the research results shows the degree of feeling pride due to being Polish has changed, especially in the last years. What was indicated as the reason for lacking national pride was again a bad inner situation of the country where corruption rules and society cannot get organized (Zagórski, Strzeszewski, 2005). Similar phenomena are pointed at by the examined youth. Learners, regardless of the type of school they attend, view their country as their homeland, which requires deep reforms. Positive answers appear much less frequently than pejorative ones and they mainly appear in the responses of the female learners from general secondary schools. The remaining respondents indicate unambiguously that the country does not function properly and needs repairing. They often use strong expressions, such as: “filth”, “parody of a state”, “backwardness”. They also think the situation results from the state's faulty policy, which confirms the standpoint of W. Stróżewski, who emphasizes that “the care for Poland, for the common wealth

associated with it, was successfully eradicated in favour of party interest, various clans, and abominable private gain. Rebuilding citizen feeling, the honour of Poland, human dignity – all that is still ahead” (Stróżewski, 2006, p. 39).

In the young respondents’ opinion, globalization offers unlimited freedom of migration and also enables the choice of nationality, or its exchange for the so-called world citizenship. As Józef M. Bocheński highlights “declaring citizenship of particular nation is conditioned by circumstances which are independent of the individual’s will, such as the place and time of birth; however, it is also a matter of personal decision. This decision may take place in relation to nation in the basic sense – when one abandons nationality, the bonds with the land and language. The decision, though, is necessary when the broad sense of nation is taken into consideration – when it concerns culture and ideology in which one believes. Thus, it seems that authentic and mature love for one’s homeland is finally a matter of choice. Such a moment comes when one must say that one wants who one is as a member of this particular, not another, nation. This is sometimes a difficult choice which demands constant re-consideration: having made a choice once and for all, I must choose in every moment” (quoted in: Stróżewski, 2006, p. 40).

For the majority of the pupils the future both in Poland and in Europe or further in the world seems uncertain, although they are all in favour of disappearing borders and “the world’s evolution towards a global village”. The youth’s feeling might be reflected in the following example quotes:

- *My opinion on Poland, Europe and the World is very pessimistic. Commercialized society brings about the devaluation of basic values.*
- *I think that both in the world and in particular countries a break is taking place. Societies are dividing into better and worse. International relations are becoming more and more tense, which will finally lead to a next war. I think it is a threat to everybody.*
- *I do not feel Polish. My aim is going abroad to get higher education and a good command of a language. Maybe I will decide to return to my country one day, but only for love, not for the homeland. As the first thing, the communist generation must disappear so that the young could introduce changes in the government.*
- *I think I have no influence on the shape of Poland and I wish I had. The future of Poland is uncertain, our government makes us feel ashamed – a big zoo. There is no single honest man there because others will not let him. This makes me want to study political sciences and to introduce order. I love my birthplace and my home, and I hope I will never have to leave it.*
- *I feel I am a Polish citizen. I often feel disgusted by the politicians’ attitudes. I wish we, the Poles, were honestly ruled.*

## **Consumer society and the youth's readiness to undertake citizen activities disinterestedly and to devote personal interest for the benefit of others**

A citizen society is a particular form of society. It is characterized by group self-consciousness (cognitive and normative), which is shared to a considerable degree and which plays a significant role. What distinguishes citizen societies is the fact that their elements are connected owing to common or group self-consciousness of common participation in society. As Edward Shils indicates "citizenship is a particular view of life and a disposition of citizen society which derives from individuals' participation in its group self-consciousness. Citizenship results in ties with the whole society, which are manifested in decisions and actions leading to protection and multiplication of the whole society's welfare. It is the attitude in which individuals' personality consciously allows for their participation in group personality, which in turn limits and shapes individuals' activities. Citizenship means accepting the obligation to act (at least in a certain range) for the common good while making decisions concerning contradictory interests or ideals" (Shils, 1994, pp. 10–11).

Thus, the obligation to act for the common good is one of the markers of a citizen society. A consumer society, however, is characterized by the triad: fast food, fast sex, fast car (Melosik, 2001). Exorbitant consumption becomes the basic aim of social life and the consumer is forced to constant exchange of goods.

Talks and interviews with the examined youth, as well as the analysis of their questionnaire answers enabled to outline the level of engagement in social affairs. Only 36% of the learners feel and declare the need for social engagement. The level of their interest in the country's affairs can be described as medium (general secondary schools) or low (technical and vocational schools). This seems to be an alarming fact as the acceptance of the obligation to act is a constitutive feature of a citizen society and its lack may bring about serious consequences for democracy. In a way, the young people's attitudes to social engagement showed their ignorance of the principles of functioning in democracy. The possibility to influence the state's functioning is also low (19%), and voluntary membership of various organizations reaches 29%. Nonetheless, the learners appeared much more positive in comparison to their parents, who hardly encourage their children to undertake such activities and who do not declare engagement in social activities themselves. Young people do not undertake work for school or the local community, either; but they spend their free time meeting friends, frequenting pubs, watching TV, practising sports, and surfing the Internet. The results of the research are similar to those obtained

in 2004 by the CBOS, in which the question “In your opinion, do people like you have influence on the country’s affairs?” was answered “no” by 83% and “yes” by only 15%. Thus, it can be concluded that not only the young but also Polish adult society have a very low feeling of a possible influence on social affairs.

The CBOS studies conducted in 1998–2004 also indicated the majority of Polish citizens do not engage in social group activity. Only every fourth adult Pole declares membership of a certain association, club or party. The level of engagement of the Poles seems relatively stable and depends on their education and material status. The higher education and better material status, the bigger interest in social activity. Unemployment, low education and a difficult material situation bring about no interest in such activity. However, there are some enclaves of social engagement in our relatively passive society. One of them consists of pupils and university students who, more frequently than others, act for: youth organizations (14%), sport associations (13%), charitable organizations for children (8%) and others in need (6%); as well as for school and educational (7%), tourist (6%), artistic (6%), religious and church (5%) associations (Zagórski, Strzeszewski, 2005, p. 260). The types of self-realization activity, a particular “way of life” of contemporary youth, seem to be hopeful and, when supported by educational actions, offer a chance for the re-birth of youth’s citizen activity and their devoting personal interests for the sake of others in a new, dynamically changing reality.

## **Final remarks**

The youth living at the turn of the centuries and the turn of the millennia constitute a specific group, differing from the previous young generations. This difference has its sources in the socio-cultural, economic and political situation of our country, Europe and the world, which becomes a certain point of reference.

In the environment of accelerated changes due to globalization and transformation processes, the traditional order of values becomes unstable – the values which refer to particular human, social and economic situations start to be more accepted than others.

Young people’s current world of values is mostly based on new culture, which exerts influence on their lifestyle. Modern youth are not tied together by the common view on life, axiology or communication code (as it took place in post-war or post-communist years, for instance). The young are a generation of growing differentiation of attitudes and valuing assessments, they seem especially lost, reflective, and focusing on their own existence. These conclusions find confirma-

tion in the flattened structure of values appreciated by the learners, which emerged from the results of the author's studies.

What appears to be characteristic of the changes occurring in the youth's system of values is the increasing significance of self-realization values and the decreasing significance of social values. The discussed differentiation of attitudes does not comprise all areas of life. Young people present relatively homogeneous attitudes towards three groups of values – religious sanctities, moral, and truth values. Youth highly evaluate all the values related to faith, religion, morality, knowledge, family, friendship, as well as the values related to work and education. In their opinion, these values allow for certain economic standards, which guarantees fulfilling many life goals. The youth's axiological preferences are also oriented towards fulfilling hedonistic, material, and individual-private values.

In spite of the declared patriotism and the readiness to defend the homeland in danger, the respondents also present a very critical attitude to their own country and the feeling of their little influence on the state's functioning. This situation frequently results in the young people's lack of civil engagement.

The problems undertaken in this work are numerous, but also current. Aware of certain limitations which influenced the contents of the article, I do hope that it can, to a small extent at least, contribute to the discussion on the condition of the young adolescent generation in the environment of "the new disorder of the world". Thus, it may be worth, as R. Kapuściński emphasized "re-thinking the world anew", including the world of education, with the whole complexity of globalization processes which are part of "the inevitable destiny of the world".

Translated by Agata Cienciała

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