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Identity in the Multicultural World¹

Multiculturalism and Identity – Preliminaries

Who am I? This question asked by Kant has become of special significance nowadays. This uniqueness is a result of the global processes – globalisation and metropolisation – which force a redefinition of identity, both individual and social. The need for changing the perception of identity confronts the history of the term which is derived from the Latin *idem* (identity and continuity), although in *Metaphysics*, Aristotle wrote that “[...] identity is a unity of the multiplicity of things, or the union of one thing understood as multiplicity” (Golka 2010: 327). For centuries, identity has been an important existential problem which is faced with new challenges associated with something that Ryszard Kapuściński described as the world at a crossroads. Identity is not only a biological duration of man, but it introduces the principle of social order in which we exist and that of our culture. Extending the issue, we will quote the words by Manuel Castells that identity is the most important category ordering the relationship of man with the world, as focusing on the search for harmony of human beings with the differentiating cultural world in which they are entangled becomes important. It is the search for identity of a modern man (Castells 2008).

Considerations presented in this article apply mainly to the depiction of the main problems of the formation of individual identity and the social multicultural reality. To give these issues a strong distinctive character, we draw attention to the problems of identity in its two previous dimensions: modern and postmodern. On that background, the problems of contemporary identities seem to be particularly significant both for the individual and the society, whose common denominator is the fact that they exist in the social space of many cultures.

¹ This article entitled “Identity in the Multicultural World” was published in the Polish language in the work: *Tożsamość i świat wielokulturowy [Identity in a Multicultural Context]*, L. Dyczewski, K. Jurek (red.), Wydawnictwo KUL, Centrum Europejskie Natolin, Lublin–Warszawa 2013, pp. 81–97.

The Construction of Identity

Formation of identity is one of the fundamental processes subjected to sociological analysis, and “the Unit” – Jürgen Habermas wrote – “must get on the awareness of individuality and freedom [...]” This is a recognition of one’s self-awareness which means awareness of the unit. Among the most frequent references to identity, there appears [...] “a collection of perceptions, judgments, beliefs, which constructs an entity to itself, that is, the system self-definition of the social actor” (Flis 2004: 11). In this spirit, sociological literature has adopted the terms of identity concerning both the individual and the society. In the first case, it is a social actor’s involvement in a variety of network connections, which are based on the interactionist sociological tradition on the one hand, and on developmental psychology of Erik Erikson on the other hand. He described identity of a person in a biographical dimension, as a continuity of experience of the individual, its specificity and uniqueness (Budyta-Budzyńska 2010: 92–94). Due to interactionism, however, the unit forms a subjectively ranked hierarchy of values according to their importance. The interaction creates and sustains the identity, because “the unit is not a permanent structure of characteristics and qualities, but a dynamic, changing actor equipped in self-definitions invoked interactively, which constitute [...] a key factor in the evolving prospects” (Pasamonik 1999: 28). Identity is a phenomenon rooted in the identification process, that is, identification with certain configurations of values, historical facts and cultural patterns. Being aware of different meanings of the terms identity and identification, we refer to Antonina Kłoskowska who introduced such a distinction in Polish sociology. In the work *National Cultures at the Root*, she wrote that identity is a subjective structure of self-knowledge and self-feelings.

National identification is a part and a factor of global personality and identity, which is the totality and oneness, but composed of multiplicity, variable and sometimes full of tension (there is an emotional factor involved) (Kłoskowska 1996). Identities shaped through identification are realised indirectly through discourse (Misztal 2000: 143). The modern world involved in global processes redefines the process of shaping identity giving it, along with the discursive character, the value of flexibility and openness to the social space of references. Nowadays, people live in different cultural worlds, forcing simultaneously continuous modification of individual identity, that is, developing a relationship between themselves and the outside world. As Gordon Mathews rightly observes: “[...] identity is what the units themselves understand, classify, call [...]” (Mathews 2005: 36), and he puts a thesis that identity is not clearly defined and given once and for all, but it is also not so fragile, as the postmodernists would like it to be. The author of *The Supermarket of Culture* claims that: “The problem of identity refers to the way people understand themselves through the choices they

make in the supermarket of culture” (Mathews 2005: 36). Identity is not a ready construct, but it becomes one in a certain moment and social space. Similarly, Anthony Giddens claims: “[...] the identity of the unit is not simply something given as a result of the continuity of his/her actions, but something that must be routinely produced and maintained by a reflexively working unit” (Giddens 2001: 74). So identity is not given once and for all, but it changes during the stages of life of an individual. The claim is of particular importance in the modern world, when global processes rapidly transform our socio-cultural reality. This reality affects the shape of identity of the individuals living in its space, who make decisions taking into consideration elements of the outside world by modifying their own identity. Identity of an individual is not permanently connected to his/her social identity which refers, inter alia, to the collective consciousness of Émile Durkheim, being a constitutive element of society as a *sui generis* reality. Durkheim wrote: “We postulate society specifically distinct from individuals, since otherwise morality becomes irrelevant and the obligation has no point of reference” (Szacki 1964: 62). The concept of social identity does not reduce straight to one’s inner social actor, although it is sometimes understood as multiplied individual identity based on common, or similar to all or most of the actors, systems of values, norms, customs, traditions, language, economy, or specific territory. To put it succinctly: “[...] Social identity means experiencing and assimilating traditions and the present, and defining future common for a given group” (Jałowiecki, Szczepański, Gorzelak 2007: 212). The identity of the unit and the social one are not separate entities, but they are intertwined with each other in various aspects. People see themselves through social features such as involvement in social and cultural structures, which confirm the identity of the unit in its current form. Changing the structure forces the transformation of identity. This is important from the point of view of the present, which emphasises the continuity of changes and modification of individual identity, resulting from the units entering the discourse with the constantly changing social reality. This understanding of identity is completely different from the traditional approach, which glorified stability of relationships and attachment to a particular place both in vertical and horizontal terms. That reality was characterised by the idea of the status quo, which was largely attributed to the individual identity. Fluidity of the world at the beginning of the 21st century forces a researcher to consider the questions of identification and self-identification. We recognise the problem of multidimensional identity of a social actor as a result of acquisition of elements of different cultures, which constitute the social space of the unit. The identity of the individual is created in the social space, but there is no clear and consistently enforced identity construct which would be accepted by individuals belonging to the social space. In the past, as, among others, Bronisław Malinowski (1980) or Claude Lévi-Strauss (2009) pointed out, a principle of reciprocity dominated, that is, the rule of symmetry of benefits. Self-identification

unit was confined to the acquisition of elements of the imposed structure and social reality. The modern world, which exposes the victory of individualism over collectivism, changed the way in which the identity of the social actor is built (Flis 2004: 17). A modern man thinks, acts, and thus shapes his/her own identity in the environment of many cultures. This behaviour is intentional and is based on the idea of constructivism which forces a man to acts of transgression, that is, acts of continuous creating and modifying the unit's identification, as well as creating and inventing subjective worlds. The identity of a modern man is thus characterised by a number of dimensions which, according to Anthony Giddens, focus on the following three:

- a) reflexive "self," which is continuous and all-encompassing;
- b) temporality, meaning that the individual identity creates a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future;
- c) narrative leading to the maintenance of an integrated sense of "self." It is also a balance between the opportunity and the risk, and the sense of being honest with oneself (Giddens 2001: 104–112).

The process of shaping the identity of a social actor takes place in a particular social reality which today is characterised by the mutual coexistence and intermingling of different cultures. Accordingly, a problem of individual identity in the multi-cultural social reality arises. By undertaking the task of analysing the identity of contemporary individuals, one must remember that in the globalised world, there still exist many communities that maintain their traditional identity based primarily on the commonly shared territory and nationalistic nature of social and cultural structures. Numerous African tribes, and among them the Hadza tribe living on the territory of northern Tanzania, and leading the life similar to that from 10,000 years ago, constitute excellent examples. The point of reference in shaping their identities is, primarily, their territory where they grow onions and corn, breed cattle and goats, and own four objects: bow, arrows, knife, and pipe. They still use their language, and dance *epeme*, although civilisation enters their world more and more frequently (Finkel 2010: 35–58). There are less and less communities like this in the world, but still, there are many. Therefore, the analysis of the transformations of modern societies should be accompanied by reflection on the elements which are traditional and established in scientific research and theoretical considerations.

Carousel of Identity: *Homo Faber*, *Homo Viator*...

Identity understood in a traditional way, as it is preserved in the sociological literature, relates primarily to the interpersonal relationships and is connected with human attachment to a particular place. Such identification is characteristic of two worlds, the first of which is the identity of the modern world, and the

second – that of the postmodern one. The identity of the modern world was shaped mainly by the workplace, and the fixed process of socialisation where the order of macrostructures and self-construction of the unit were closely linked. Without obstacles, the socio-economic system of the modern world, modelled people to become the actual or potential performers in the working processes, finding other roles as less significant. In this context, the concept of *homo faber*, or working man, becomes relevant, referring to a person who has his/her personality shaped by a game of a man with the artificial environment (a machine) (Bell 1998). It is worth recalling that, for the first time, the term *homo faber* was used by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), a philosopher and a writer of the Italian Renaissance. His greatest work, “The Dignity of Man” was considered a manifesto of humanism. Pico is also considered to be the author of the “personality” concept, and of the claim that science can recognise something as true only if it can be proved and demonstrated. Yet, in this context, the concept of *homo faber* and the corresponding statement uttered by the Italian Renaissance philosopher, that “every man is the architect of his own fortune,” remain most important. This sentence drew attention to the personal development of a man, which is the philosophy that appeared in the ideas of the Renaissance. The concept of *homo faber* has had a particular impact on the positivist thought. For the propagation of his views, particularly these depicting a man as autonomous and independent of God, Pico came into conflict with the church. He argued that human nature is undefined, and each unit can potentially become whom he/she wants to be. People themselves determine their fate by acting. It may be useful to recall here that Pico was a friend of Girolamo Savonarola. This friendly bond probably caused the poisoning of the philosopher by the opponents of the revolutionary Dominican. After all, arsenic, lead and mercury were found in Pico’s bones.

In the modern stage of social development, the phenomenon of position inheritance is still emphasised, although it gives way to the universality of the pre-industrial stage which was characterised by Margaret Mead as postfigurative culture. Its most important feature was the fact that “[...] continuity is maintained through denial of everything that interferes with a sense of identity and continuity, from one’s memory” (Mead 1978: 53). Here, as the author of “Three Stages” writes, there are ready made answers to the questions: “Who am I? What is the role of my life as an individual in my culture? How should I talk and walk, eat and sleep, love and make a living, be a parent and accept death?” (Mead 1978: 31). The answers to these questions appear virtually at birth in a particular culture, because “it [...] provides a clearer sense of continuity over a long time” (Mead 1978: 54). This phenomenon has not gone into the global archive, but it is still characteristic, among others, of indigenous peoples. These are the communities living on the margins of global processes, which are still struggling with racism and discrimination – currently, there are 370 million of them.

The most predictable identity appeared in the pre-industrial stage of social development, although in the modern society it was still valid. Yet, the successive stages were becoming more and more unpredictable, which gave identity issues central position in the scientific investigations. Predictability in creating identity projects was a consequence of the existence of two social conditions:

- sustainability of social structures surrounding the unit, which mostly did not change along the life trajectory of individuals,
- these structures effectively resisted reforms, tendency towards change, individual and collective fashions.

The level of macro-social phenomena was independent of what happened at the micro-level. The spatial and social mobility of the units also did not have the features of revolution, hence the identity of the unit was a kind of focusing lens of the elements of socialisation taking place in a fixed cultural and social structure. They marked the place (territory) of life of the unit, usually within a small community in which the trajectories of human destinies run. A description of the fate of the inhabitants of Tel Ilan village in Israel, written by Amos Oz, may serve as an example. He depicts the joys and tragedies of human life involved in calm and, at the same time, mysterious country life (Oz 2010).

During the transition from modernity to postmodernity, work was slowly losing its central place in favour of freedom and individualism of the unit. A man, previously attached to a territory and connected by a social bond with other units, became a man looking for new experiences. "This [...] progressive strengthening of the motif, [was] organising the majority of human activities and shaping the aspirations and life plans of the units" (Bokszański 2007: 10). This means – according to Ulrich Beck – that "[...] industrial society grows weaker in the process of self-realisation [...]" (Beck 2002: 22) and individuals have the desire to live their own lives, manifested in making unfettered decisions in various areas and undertaking their own autonomous actions. Freedom of choice of the unit, combined with the flexibility of social structures, allows the formation of individual identity in late modernity (postmodernity). As Nicolas Rose writes: "Contemporaneity is built on the assumption that a unit uninhibited in his/her decisions and choices of courses of action is its fundamental element" (Rose 1996: 320). A man has become the starting point of action, its initiator, rather than being exclusively responsive to stimuli and embedded in the assigned place of birth within the cultural and social structure. In this context, the place becomes meaningless in the face of eradicating mechanisms, and the primary factor changing this state of affairs is not the intensification of mobility, but the fact that the places became completely penetrated by these mechanisms which combined local activities in space-time relationships of an ever-growing range. A place becomes an illusion (Giddens 2001), which may be described by the

Greek term *atopon* (gr., *átopos* – ‘without a place,’ ‘place anywhere’). It means something deprived of space, which escapes fixed schemes and raises amazement (Dziuban 2008: 303), and consequently, the need for scientific description and explanation. In the sphere of these considerations, the perception of time, which does not have linear and continuous character but is a collection of episodes with no chronological order, becomes important. This is the result of modern compression and tyranny of time which treats each state reached today as temporary. Postmodernism that, first of all, means breaking with the idea of the world as an ongoing project, forces an individual into the modern world, which is pluralistic, consisting of autonomous areas and positions of power, self-constituted and not determined by anything beside its own movement.

Among the most important consequences of this state, one can find pluralism and cultural diversity as well as the multiplicity of discourses. The culture with the fundamental axionormative system, which was an enclave of modern order, perfection, and prevailed over human action, today is losing its position of a strongly integrating factor. Social events become dynamic and detach the unit and the social life from the established patterns and practices. As a result, reflexivity is developing (Giddens 2006: 687–691), meaning that the relationship of an individual with the world is subjected to revision due to exposure to new experiences (contact with different cultures) and new knowledge. Hierarchical systems of values died and the dominant form today is the world of diverse cultures in a social space – the world, which has produced a new type of identity requiring scientific reflection and redefinition.

Human being of late modernity (postmodernity) can therefore be defined as *homo viator* (lat. ‘traveler,’ ‘pilgrim’). He/she is a man on the way, a traveler and a wanderer. An archetype of a human wanderer is found in the Book of Genesis – it is a man who was banished from paradise and still wanders in the search of good. The Jews will therefore travel to the Promised Land, whereas Christians will strive to be happy, and it will be happiness that is understood diversely, for example, as the freedom of their homeland. The aim of the Christians is to achieve eternal life. In isolation from the religious context, *homo viator* functions in the sense of wandering in search of the ultimate meaning of existence. *Homo viator* – *topos*, a man travelling on a journey full of adventures, a pilgrim, an emigrant, and in literature, among others, Odysseus – the hero of *The Odyssey* by Homer. He is a medieval symbol of human fate, *topos* of a man who is travelling, wandering, which, among others, was an inspiration for *Ulysses*, a novel by James Joyce, or *The Return of Odysseus*, a drama by our native writer Stanisław Wyspiański. The term *homo viator* also found its place in the thought of Gabriel Honoré Marcel. This French philosopher, religious thinker and co-founder of Christian existentialism, used the term *homo viator* to describe a man constantly pursuing the fullness of humanity and participating in the hardships of life. It is a wanderer. In late modernity it is a man looking for his/her own place.

Identity in a Multicultural World: *Marginal Man*

Reflections on identity basically amount to two worlds: individual and group (social, collective) identity. Social identity describes a group by means of continuity and continuation (collective memory, history, tradition), as well as by the articulation of elements distinguishing the group from the external environment. The identity of the unit, in turn, includes mainly the core, that is, the identity of the individual unit which allows him/her to remain himself/herself. It is a self-conception of a man, which is subjected to modifications as a result of the discourse with the outside world. It is something that defines an individual, creates his/her self-image which contains both fixed and variable characteristics. The stability of individual identity is the result of Erickson's tradition, which is based on the sense of being the same person. The variation element, on the other hand, belongs to the interactionist tradition, that is, the modification of identity by the interaction with others. In this segment, the subjective and the reflected ego of the unit is included, both of which shape the unit's self-image and modify his/her behaviour. The identity of the unit also consists of social identities, which are numerous and connected with the performance of specific social roles and with particular reference groups. These are variable properties, formed mainly in the process of secondary socialisation. Yet, the identity of the unit is also ethnic (national) identity, which results from one's belonging to ethnic or national group. This type of identity is formed by birth. It is a feature assigned to and associated with the ethnic group that strives to maintain the cultural and historical continuity, as well as to reproduce the cultural canon (Budyta-Budzyńska 2010: 91) which, in the modern world, may be subjected to revision. This simultaneously leads to the revision of identity.

Therefore, the identity of the unit consists of three levels of factors that provide an answer to the question: *Who am I?* The shape of individual identity is significantly influenced by the social group and ethnic (national) group, in the structures of which the unit operates. In the monocultural and stable world, the social structures showed consistency, harmony, and social order, and the identity of the unit once shaped, had a tendency to last. The modern world of various cultures confronting one another in a particular social space destroys this simple rule and, instead, raises the need for the reconstruction of knowledge regarding identity – the identity in a multicultural reality.

Wolfgang Welsh, a German theorist of culture, in his considerations about the world of contemporary cultures, started with the criticism of the notion of national culture defined by Johann Gottfried von Herder. The representative of the German Enlightenment treated every culture as a monolithic and closed sphere, and assumed that different spheres cannot exchange, communicate, or mix with each other in any other way than by means of colliding with each other (Welsh 2004: 33). This clearly nationalistic concept of culture, which established

a number of national movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was challenged by Welsh. It should be remembered, however, that Herder found in culture the only factor integrating the German nation in the face of absence of any state structures, but later, others used his words to increase credibility of many nationalist and separatist movements. Meanwhile, Welsh arguing his scientific attitude noticed that even the traditional cultures, in fact, showed evidence of diversity. Therefore, the confluence of cultures in today's globalised world is not new, but it did not occur on such a large scale in the past as it does nowadays. Welsh himself recognises that in the modern world there are no pure cultures. He says vividly and bluntly, that "[...] we are all hybrids" (Welsh 2004: 41–43). The only problem is the attitude of tolerance towards cultural diversity. To what extent is it coexistence, and to what extent is it a real conflict, or one located only in the symbolic sphere?

In the scientific but also in the public discourse of the most important phenomena of the modern world, the debate on multiculturalism, that is, coexistence of multiple cultures in a particular social space, which interact with one another, takes a more important place. Multiculturalism is also an institutionalised – on the principles of democracy – coexistence of individuals, communities, and other forms of social collectivity within the state organism. In such a system, they refer to the proper cultural structure created by a collection of ideas, beliefs, views, specific habits, and customs, with an axiological and normative order. This identification strengthens the inner unity of the group and creates its separateness from the outside world expressed by the principle: We are who we are, we are different, and the fact that we are different is the reason to be proud, and not to *be* ashamed. This sentence comes to the forefront of social existence in the societies whose essence is the idea of multiculturalism. In the modern world, multiculturalism is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon, although it is not recognised and accepted by everyone. Sometimes it is also questioned and seen as the cause of some negative social phenomena. Multiculturalism which is based on cultural difference is the result of identification of particular culture with an ethnic group or race "[...] each ethnic group should treat the value of their own culture as a sign of individuality and diversity. The specificity of each group must be fully respected, and particularly – it must be respected by the 'majority' of the society, which so far has imposed the existing cultural canon on the minority groups" (Burszta 1997: 29). Culture is the basis of difference for each group, which allows its members' self-determination. Those who find themselves in a different cultural system, emphasise their individuality, which prevents them from vanishing in the new environment. This situation favours formation of ethnic groups isolating themselves from the outside world, which incapacitate their members, and thus lead to the emergence of competing ghettos and ethnic diasporas. But multiculturalism which means: "[...] ideology and policy of respecting and harmonising cultural differences in the area of a given country [...]"

(Golka 2007: 224) also has a second face. It is proclaimed by anthropologists and based on the principle of cultural relativism, that is, equal treatment of all cultures. This first understanding, however, has been criticised, among others, by an advocate of pluralism – Giovanni Sartori, who sees multiculturalism as the cause of social separation, and pluralism – as the cause of integration (Śliz 2009: 31–36). But the most opposing attitude towards multiculturalism was presented in a comment of Ulrich Beck. According to the author of *Society of Risk*, this phenomenon, despite the enormous emphasis it puts on pluralism and diversity, makes the units dependent on their culture of origin. The unit is a product of his/her own culture, language, and traditions, which must be protected from the dangers of the outside world. A man is thus locked in a limited world. The unit, however, is autonomous and should not in any way be enslaved, all the more so as in the modern world, human rights as well as the institutions of a supranational democracy are becoming more and more important. The dispute about multiculturalism becomes widespread. In reality, however, it comes down to recognising that multiculturalism fosters tolerance and respect for diversity on the one hand, and it gives birth to the dangerous phenomena of isolation, ghettoisation, and discrimination on the other.

The phenomenon of multiculturalism connected with the processes of migration and democratisation of many countries, has become an important challenge in the considerations regarding the formation and transformation of both unit and group identity. The unit living in a multicultural social space is in a situation of the continuous contact with various axionormative systems which differ to various degrees. The identity of the social actor is shaped in a particular social iconosphere. The change and transformation of this iconosphere affect the continuous modification of individual identity. A man living in a social space that is created by a spectacular mosaic of cultures, is continuously exposed to new experiences relating to values, norms, and patterns of behavior and lifestyle. However, one should be aware that the contact with multiculturalism manifesting itself in ethnic restaurants and street fairs differs from the contact with multiculturalism the foundations of which have been built by the numerous ethnic groups (Mucha 1999: 41–51). This type of identity occurs primarily in the societies formed in the process of immigration (Canada, USA, and Australia). Reflections on identity in the multicultural (mosaic) world lead to associations connected with the Chicago school and, above all, with the name of Robert E. Park. This co-founder of the American descriptive school, in his article titled “Human Migration and the Marginal Man” (1928 and 1929) (Park 1929), analyses the emergence of the marginal man who participates in the cultural and social life of many groups. A new type of personality has de facto emerged – a cultural hybrid which prevents one’s full participation in two or more systems of culture. The concept of the marginal man was introduced permanently into the theory of world sociology by Park’s Ph.D. student – Everett V. Stonequist who,

in the book *The Marginal Man. A Study in Personalist and Cultural Conflict*, published in 1937, pointed out the dual personality of man. It can develop into a marginal personality (marginal man), when the human being in the process of socialisation is in contact with different cultures and their components such as values, norms, customs (Czekaj 2007: 264–265). Such situation illustrates social spaces in which a clash of many cultures takes place, and a man is involved in their structures to various degrees. Hence, he/she assimilates the elements of culturally diverse worlds, modifying his/her own identity, while simultaneously searching for its basic dimension. This dimension, being at the same time the foundation of human identity, is based on maintaining the awareness of one's own "self" which, in addition to individual features, includes the cultural canon of one's own ethnic group, internalised in the primary socialisation process. In a situation of intense confrontation with the social world, clearly distant in the axiological and normative sense, a struggle between the ethnic and the social world may take place in the mind of a particular individual. A Canadian documentary film *In the Name of the Family*, directed by Shelley Sayweel, shows the stories of young Muslim women who came to Toronto, Dallas, and New York, leaving their families in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Egypt. They wanted to stay Muslim but, at the same time, they wanted to live differently – without headscarves, wearing jeans and trendy t-shirts, with many friends among the non-Muslims, studying and working. They wanted to perform the role of a woman, wife, and mother in a different way. Choosing their own path, they objected to the fathers and brothers, for which they paid the ultimate price – their lives. They wanted to live in two worlds, but the power of tradition did not allow them to do so. They were killed in the name of the family honor, religion, and culture. The United Nations estimates that there are approximately five thousand similar killings a year. This is a drastic example illustrating the problem of identity in a multicultural reality. For further considerations regarding the outlined issues, the authors of this article refer to the multicultural reality of Canada (The Land of the Maple Leaf).

Identity in the Multicultural Reality of Canada

Canada has developed on the basis of a group of immigrants arriving from different cultural backgrounds during a long historical period. Initially, they came almost exclusively from Europe but over time, the representatives of other countries and continents started to join them. Today's territory of Canada is inhabited by the representatives of more than a hundred ethnic groups. Thus, it is a land of many cultures, although for hundreds of years – the European settlements in Canada began about 400 years ago – it was inhabited by the indigenous population of Indians and Eskimos (Inuit). Later, the third group

joined them – the Metis. Today, more than 1.3 million Canadians declare their partial descent from the indigenous people of the Land of the Maple Leaf. The majority of Canadians have learned to live with the cultural diversity, and the governments have managed to adapt their policy to it. The immigrants arriving to Canada today, from almost all corners of the world, differ in culture and they are often full of mutual antagonisms and resentments of historical provenance. They live together in the changing and developing cities. They have great mutual respect, as only such an attitude enables them to build a desirable and necessary social order. This coexistence, which does not exclude conflicts primarily in the symbolic world, is the story of Canada's confrontation with its own multiculturalism. It is a story of realising that different cultures and groups of people may coexist in the same space and that this situation may have various consequences (Golka 2007: 224). The full awareness of multiculturalism in Canada dates back to the year 1971, when the country's government led by the Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, accepted the official ideology and policy of respecting and harmonising cultural differences in the area of the state. At this point Canada becomes a multicultural society (Golka 2007: 224) and it is proud of such a policy (Śliz 2009). A relevant entry saying that: "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the protection and assisted multicultural heritage of Canada," introduced to the Constitution in 1982 and based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, added credibility to the officially adopted policy of Canada. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives its citizens the right to express their cultural diversity, which is the reality of the modern society in the country of Indian and Inuit people. The cultural variety is considered to be the fundamental feature of the Canadian heritage. Basing on this feature, the Canadian society builds social integration, national loyalty, and citizenship.

Canadian multiculturalism raises many problems, the most important one being the problem of identity of the inhabitants. From the point of view of Canada – a multi-ethnic country, where everyone came from somewhere – the growing tendency to identify oneself as a Canadian/Canadien, appears to be most significant. This civic identity is connected with the sphere of politics. It means that one can be a citizen of the state, with no dominant national identity. Then, dual identity appears, as the civic and national (cultural) identity exist concurrently, but they are separate. The residents of Canada can be found in such a reality, where the national (ethnic) identity creates the world of culture for an individual, which is only one of many worlds equal in terms of political and administrative structures. The strong ethnic (cultural) identity promotes activity to attain a good place for one's own ethnic group in the country of residence. In such circumstances, individuals identify themselves primarily with their own ethnic group and its culture. Once the relationship with the ethnic group weakens, they are looking for a reference group in the state structures, in

their citizenship. Among the subsequent generations of immigrants in Canada, a strong tendency for the development of civic identity may be observed. The opposite situation may be illustrated by the groups of new immigrants who express mainly their single ethnic identity. The ethnic groups from the world of Islamic culture or the Canadian Mennonites are perfect examples of this phenomenon. The first recorded civic identities emerged in Canada in the 1980s. In the subsequent years, there has been a significant increase of the Canadian/Canadien identification, from 0.5 per cent in 1986 through 4 per cent in 1991 to 32 per cent in 2006 (Budyta-Budzyńska 2010: 102). This increase relates primarily to people who have already been born in Canada, and their relationship with the ethnic group is weak. These are the units who lack strong internal ethnic (national, cultural) identity, and are willing to open themselves to the outside world. These social actors do not confine themselves to ethnic ghettos where the compulsion to establish identity based on the traits of tradition reigns, and where cultural structures are exclusive and the only legitimate ones.

In such reality the issue of identity is extremely important, and the continuous contact with the mosaic world of cultures makes an individual internalise parts of the outside world, and shape his/her own identity in a similar way. In a situation when individuals constantly modify their identities, as the cultural spaces change, individual (basic) identity – a term introduced by Malek Chabel – the one that preserves the continuity of one's self-identification is particularly important. People do not want to identify themselves again and again, much less live with a sense of identity dissonance. They do not want to make constant choices and still wonder who they are. The solution to these dilemmas is civic identity that in Canada has taken the form of Canadian/Canadien identification.

The problem of multicultural social spaces also derives from the presence of many amalgam marriages. The descendants of such couples are often forced to choose with which culture they identify. This situation becomes even more complicated in the subsequent generations. Hence, the Canadians replaced the complicated and ambiguous ethnic identity with national identity (citizenship) and loyalty. They identify themselves with the Canadian state and its structures. More and more often they shape and relate to the fundamental identity of being a Canadian. Successively, they internalise the elements of various cultures, not only of their ancestors' communities of origin. It seems that the Canadians noticed this problem themselves, and as a postulate of the contemporary Canadian multiculturalism they accepted the identity postulate. It assumes favouring such social coexistence in which people are able to see the sense of belonging to and identifying with Canada. The significance of the problem stems from the need to unite the Canadian society in a situation when the units have internalised the diversified primordial ties. The growing Canadian/Canadien identification shows an increase in the intensity of a connection with Canada, without ignoring at the same time the ties with the ethnic community. The example of the Canadian

multiculturalism makes one realise that a person involved in a multicultural world needs the primary identity that does not exclude permanent modifications based on the participation in a world of many cultures. The identity of the people living in a multicultural world is seen as highly complex, and the realisation of *Who am I?* lies in their own biography.

The Mosaic Identity – Conclusion

The contemporary global processes set new paths in the analysis of both unit and collective identity. The confrontation of cultures and their coexistence in a single social space, have imposed the need to rethink the questions: *Who am I? Who are we?* The answer to the questions formulated this way is becoming more and more complex and requires a revision of the existing perception and definition of identity. Not denying an important place to its traditional definition, especially its reference to a specific territory and established social and cultural structures, it seems important to name the new identity and its dimensions. These new dimensions refer among others to a multicultural social reality, which raises the need for the modification of identity through the continuous contact with different cultures. Then, identity loses its explicitness. It becomes, applying a metaphor, a multi-coloured and multi-dimensional mosaic. This is a result of the acceptance of the culturally diverse world by the individuals. The bearers of different cultures join in the social life of a given country, bringing new elements into its axiological and normative system, and creating culturally diverse social spaces in which social actors shape a more or less temporary, yet their own, identity.

Contemporary world still requires reflection on the development and modification of identity in multicultural social spaces. It is worth noticing, however, that this interest in identity increasingly moves into the world of the Internet – into the virtual space. It is in such spaces that many people today try to find themselves.

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