

РОЗДІЛ III

Методологія соціологічних досліджень

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Toward Multi-Perspective Analysis of Social Identity

The paper presents of the multi-perspective concept of a social identity which is based on the theories which constitute the roots of the contemporary sociological reception of an identity as well as some recent anthropological theories of it. There are distinguished three such theoretical contexts: identity as an objective aspect of personality; the structure of social identities of an individual; and the process of maintaining and changing the group boundaries and individual identities. Those contexts differ widely and establish different research directions. But such conceptual network lets understand the identity problems better and provides to formulation new research problems which appear on the border of those theoretical contexts.

Key words: social identity, personality, social role, group's boundaries, multi-perspective analysis.

Statement of the Research Problem. Identity is a term that in modern social sciences has reached the status of being a basic category. There are various concepts of identity, there are debates on how to understand identity, which can be submitted as a proof that sociologists' interest in identity is not just a fashion, but signifies a growing importance of phenomena and processes noted by this category [4]. Modern 'autonomy' of an individual does not only speed up mechanisms of individual and group search for specific identities but also shapes identity – described by T. Luckmann as self-expression and self-realization – became one of the most important elements of a modern world-view, new 'sacred cosmos' [14, 147–149]. That is why identity in itself becomes an object of individual and social reflection.

Modern social sciences are, according to A. Giddens [11, 4], 'elements of institutional reflective modernity'. This involvement of sociology in a social process must have consequences for theories of identity built within its frames. The way of writing about identity in sociology characterizes 'excessive focus on identity'. This feature does not concern excessive interest in the phenomenon, but a specific method of constructing the theories. In these constructions, the term 'identity' is often not only a key term (that is understandable) but also a base term for other terms and definitions that are derived from it [4; 6; 11]¹. It creates a strong impression that modern researchers completely ignore theoretical traditions of sociology, sometimes even expressing it openly by writing about 'new sociology'. It does not mean, however, that the works of their ancestors do not influence today's theoretical researches. Looking at sociology as a live tissue of the social world, we should assume that building new theories and introducing new terms is always influenced by earlier ways of thinking.

Starting with this assumption, the **aim of this work** is to follow this influence of earlier sociological experiences on modern understanding of identity. It relies on comparisons of modern works concerning identity with concepts by such authors as F. Znaniecki, G. H. Mead, C. Geertz, F. Barth. This review aims to show theoretical contexts for identity, which will put it in the network of other sociological terms. With respect to that, we will have a multi-aspect view of what is covered by the term 'identity'. Moreover, putting together chosen theoretical approaches from almost all 20th century poses the question what was the direction of changes in sociological thinking concerning the phenomena that we describe today as identity.

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¹ A radical example of that way of thinking is the concept of *identity groups* [1, 2], which unfortunately does not point at which groups are «non-identity» ones.

Analysis of Research. The term 'identity' became known in social sciences in works by E. Erickson in late the 1950s [13, 115] and, early after that, it appeared in the works of some sociologists, like A. Strauss or M. Gordon. In modern sociological theories of identities two typologically different currents of thinking about this category seem to be present, which are most probably rooted in earlier concepts of approach to relations between an individual and the society. The first of them tries to present a general theory of identity and broadly refers to psychology and philosophy while looking for an ontological base of the phenomenon. It creates, especially in A. Giddens' works, associations with earlier theories of personality. The second current does not present such broad theoretical and ontological interests and it perceives identity in a much more 'concrete' context. Very often interest in these researches the primary focus is in identification, some in attitudes, relations between identity and society, and social group. This way of describing identity is especially common in ethnic studies and can be associated with the earlier concepts of social role [7, 5–6].

Summary of the Basic Material. Identity and Personality. Anthony Giddens stated that modernity destroys the roots of the personality [11, 48]. Moving, however from the field of social phenomena into the field of sociological theories, we may notice that identity becomes the destroyer of our imagination of personality. The above statement of Giddens justifies this. Combining Giddens' Modernity and Self-Identity with Mind, Self, and Society by George H. Mead shows a process of a transition from thinking in categories of personality characterization toward the use of the term 'identity' that had only been popularized in sociology since the 1960s. Although, Giddens distances from this relation [11, 74], in many instances, this relation is quite clear. This is important because that case points a common base for Mead's theory of the self and some of today's concepts of identity and allows for the search of broader conceptual contexts for the latter.

Personality (or the self) is a very general term that attempts to grasp all phenomena of consciousness. It suggests that personality is something complex, a set or a structure of many elements. In this aspect, Mead's [16, 217] concept is quite simple, because he writes about the self as organized social attitudes. The term 'social attitudes' turns all theory towards a crucial relation individual–society in which, according to Mead, a personality is created. A personality is the effect of an individual's participation in various social processes and it is engaged constantly in these processes. Defining personality through social attitudes is very important, because it allows posing a question to which degree identity can be treated as a set of attitudes. Following G. H. Mead's [16, 196–198] thinking, they would be attitudes that an individual takes toward him/herself. It is more than one attitude, because an individual can perceive him/herself differently in various situations [16, 199].

In the range of phenomena that it grasps, identity is, therefore something between attitude, of which it is composed, and personality, that it is an element of. Even in these approaches there is a pull to prescribe the widest meaning to the term of *identity*, a personality or self are more than identity [11, 74]. This problem finds good theoretical explanation in the concept of 'I' and 'me' by G. H. Mead. It allows clear distinction and simultaneous theoretical relation between personality and identity. 'I' is an element that is active, subjective and conscious in personalities, while 'me' is created, subjective and made aware. Modern concepts of identity take this picture of oneself for the object of their interest¹ while taking the issue of design of identity [11, 98], its construction or identification as a process. All dilemmas that refer to identity – whether it is a certain state or a process, whether it describes a similarity or a difference [6, 33–37], to a degree it is internally diversified [20, 51–54] – refer to Mead's idea of 'me'. Identity is therefore an objective aspect of personality, a set of attitudes which an individual refers to him/herself. It is separated from the subjective aspect of an individual, 'I', which is both a direct source of modifications of attitudes that compose it and a reason of conviction about continuity of identity that is a result of constant relations subject–object.

Such dualistic concept of personality with a clearly designer place for identity solves many hidden problems which are faced by modern theories. For example, identity is analyzed by some researchers in the context of a subject [6, 35–36]. But some features of identity – its complexity and changeability – do not fit to our cultural perception of the subject. It seems that the dilemma that illustrates this problem in the best way is complexity vs. unanimity of identity. There is why those researchers openly avoid the concept of many identities of an individual [6, 39–43; 12, 107–108]. Such assumption has a very reductionist character,

¹ An exemption is concept of modern identities by Z. Bauman [2].

because it skips over the problem of an individual's unique, ergo, his/her subjectivity. True enough, if we treat identity as a set of attitudes, out of which some sub-sets of i.e. religious, ethnic, sexual identity are separated and at the same time skip over the theoretical context from which it comes it will create very simplified picture of an individual. Remembering, however that it is only an element of personality that has its own characteristics and remains in relation to the rest of it, it is easier to avoid hesitations in constructing theories of identity that can lead to important inaccuracies. An individual has only one personality, that can be composed of many identities, as it was described in the quoted above fragment of Mead's work, although he did not use the term «identity».

Using such terminological network changeability and continuity of identity are much easier to interpret. The subject of social attitudes ('I') gives a warranty to continuity of identity by accepting an identity as the object according to which it sustains or modifies specific attitudes. This explanation can be taken for an elementary base for ontological continuity of identity. Empirically, continuity and changeability of an identity can be analyzed as accepting or dropping a certain attitude (or attitudes) and modification of attitude (or attitudes) through change of its (their) elements (knowledge, emotions, ability to act). Thanks to this, differentiations a process of changeability of identity (identification) can be described as gradual.

Another very important feature of identity that can be fixed by the comparison of modern theories with theory by G. H. Mead is the relation between identity and speech, its narration. As A. Giddens writes: «An identity of an individual does not lie neither in his/her behavior nor in the way he/she is perceived by others (although it has a great meaning). Identity of an individual depends on his/her ability to *sustain a continuity of certain narration*, so the individual can keep up everyday relations with others and his/her biography cannot be completely fictitious [11, 77]».

This points a fundamental content of identity. Identity is expressed and can be seen in some symbolic structures or, name it directly, in language (*parole*). On the other hand, already the Cartesian *Cogito ergo sum* connects consciousness of being by thinking. G. H. Mead [16, 198] points it very clearly: 'an individual speaks to himself in such a way as he was speaking to another person. (...) The process of thinking is only a natural internal conversation (...)'. The language is only a carrier thanks to which the identity of an individual is given to a researcher and a form in which identity exists. Language as a form of expression of identity reveals its social character and involvement in social processes.

The similarities and relations among concepts of personality (self) drawn here explain in some way why identity so easily replaces personality today. Some modern ways of thinking about identity – especially when they show aspirations to present general theory of this phenomenon – follow the traditional sociological reflection and are less or more conscious heirs of theory of personality. A tendency to extrapolate the term 'identity' to almost all consciousness phenomena comes from this. That conceptual background of identity puts light on few important theoretical problems, although it is still on quite high level of abstraction. If this deliberation, as much as works by Mead and Giddens were juxtaposed with the huge number of studies on identity – especially those which appeared in frames of sociology and anthropology of ethnic relations – it would be difficult to find important points of common reference to these concepts. In concepts of ethnic identity this phenomenon is treated as a kind of declaration of belonging (identification). Although such a viewpoint on this issue can be described in categories of theoretical background drawn here (ethnic identification is than one of social attitudes that are a part of individual identity) its roots are placed in completely different theoretical references.

Identity and Social Roles. In the 20th century, one of the key sociological terms considering the relation between an individual and society and describing its attitudes towards norms and cultural values was a social role – a term introduced to our discipline already on the beginning of last century [22, 312]. The first method of defining the social role, strongly influenced by psychology, was related to personality, a person. This last term (person) was defined by Robert E. Park as a bundle of social roles [18, 474]. In all concepts of social role, the rule of pluralism of the roles fulfilled by an individual has a basic character [18, 474; 22, 310–311]. As long as personality is being shaped in a process of an individual's socialization with a quite generally and abstractly understood society, a social role thus ties an individual to a specific social group. This thought was expressed precisely F. Znaniecki: «a member of a group is not a specific individual in all his/her biographical existence. According to Park and Burgess, being a member of a group means being a specific kind of a person, filling specific kind of a social role, each individual fills many social roles during his/her life» [21, 300].

A social role used to be originally a next step of analytical division of social personality. The way of thinking about certain consciousness' phenomena drawn this way we find in the already mentioned concepts of ethnic identification. Identity often appears in them discussed as a social role¹. What is important, the issue of multiplicity of identifications is accepted rather *implicite* and without further development of this issue (until the 1990s) [13, 115–116]. More fundamental for these concepts is the problem of relation between role/identity and the social group. As it was stated in Znaniecki's quote, each group that can be distinguished relates to a potential social identity. This allows the introduction of such categories as ethnic, national, religious etc. identity [15, 16; 19, 113–117]. As an effect of this thinking, some identities become 'expected', and appear in questionnaires, and can be developed in a process of a research.

I am not trying to suggest here a statement that social identities, or certain identifications, remain without a relation with social groups (independently of how the last term is defined). The problem is that this relation is so complex, especially when it comes to creation of groups and social identities. It can be clearly noticed that in the case of comparing these two categories: social role and identity, the last one appears in somehow different perspective than in the previous discussion. It is an identity that is describes as an adjective, a social identity. This connection with a specific social group makes this category more precise, narrower. Identity can be defined as parallel to Mead's 'me', and social identity rather cannot be treated as such, because we are sure that our biography includes some elements that, although socially conditioned and having an influence on our participation in social life, are a part of our individuality. Social identity is the element of personality that reflects our feelings of belonging to social groups. That is why it is much easier to imagine an individual with many social identities than an individual that has many identities in a general sense (this would be associated rather with a form of psychological illness).

Social role has also clearly a dualistic character. On one side is a set of individual actions (filling a role by an individual), on the other side, it assumes an existence of a cultural pattern, some ideal role model [18, 472–473; 21, 301]. This dualism calls for attention to the fact that independently from many common elements in many people's actions, sets of those actions (played roles) are individualized. On the other hand, the construction of cultural pattern of a social role allows for the searching of a common denominator for social practices of individuals. It can be concluded that the conception of a social role externalizes some phenomena which in conceptions of social identity are treated as belonging to the consciousness of individuals.

It is worth to notice that among these two aspects of social role the external cultural pattern seemed not only more important for sociologists but also easier to grasp in research [21, 305]. Because of this, the social identity can be understood not only in the relation with specific social groups but also with its culture. Nowadays, this way of thinking we can find in concepts of collective identity as a phenomenon that reaches beyond normal aggregation of individual identities of the group members, a common substitute of a specific social identity, most often ethnic [6, 63–72; 12, 100–102].

There is no doubt that at least in the sphere of studies of ethnic phenomena the idea of social role was replaced by ethnic identity. This fact is connected with the differences between those two terms pointed out by Manuel Castells: «Roles (...) are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society. (...) Identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, constructed through the process of individuation» [7, 6–7]. Despite of that – or, maybe, because of that – in many concepts of identity we find problems that are rooted in thinking of categories of social role, which refer to relation between an individual and certain social groups, identification with them, accepting specific cultural patterns.

Identity and Social Borders – Anthropological Theories of Ethnic Identity. It seems that nowadays the most popular conceptions of identity are anthropologically directed; generally it refers to F. Barth and C. Geertz or their followers. It is difficult to recognize those theories as an output of continuation of Znaniecki or Mead, yet striking similarities may be often found in them. If we look at this theory in the perspective of terms the common feature of Barth and Geertz works and people who refer to them [8; 9] is instrumentality of the term *identity*. This feature is revealed in two ways. First, in the spectrum of researchers' attention besides identity other phenomena remain (first of all culture and social organization);

¹ Such «translation» of social role on the identity concept is evident in Berger and Luckmann «The Social Construction of Reality» [5], but authors who are cited here never mention that work.

secondly, the interest of those anthropologists starts being oriented toward relations rather than toward phenomena. That second fact, very characteristic for a modern way of thinking, does not negate the value of terms that describes certain phenomena. Moreover, precise description of culture and social relations is necessary for understanding the relations taking place among them.

Culture is a key term for anthropology although it was seriously deconstructed thanks to the works of quoted authors. Both C. Geertz and F. Barth resigned from totality of the term culture giving it only a certain sphere of symbols and meanings separate from their artifacts and social and psychological phenomena [10, 128]. Culture is used selectively by individuals [2, 14] and for different purposes. Culture is a social resource of contents and meanings that can be used by an individual to build his/her own identity. Thus an identity is expressed in symbolic cultural forms. What is especially important, such identity organizes the social reality: *To the extent that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense. It is important to recognize that although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no single one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are not the sum of «objective» differences, but only those which actors themselves regard as significant* [2, 13–14].

The boundaries of ethnic groups (today we could say more generally social groups) are in their content something very similar to identity. They are built of cultural symbols with the exception that they design social not individual differences. Group boundaries and individual identities are also dependent upon each other. Social organization is made out of common meanings that last thanks to maintaining the symbolic boundaries. The boundaries of communities are simple and complex at the same time: *The boundary represents the mask presented by the community to the outside world; it is the community's public face. But the conceptualization and symbolization of the boundary from within is much more complex. To put this in another way, the boundary as the community's public face is symbolically simple; but, as the object of internal discourse it is symbolically complex.* [8, 75].

As in the concepts of social identity, identity and community are strongly related to each other. There is however a different approach to social group and the character of this relation is described differently (maybe more precisely). Individual identity and social organization maybe treated from this perspective as elements of a larger process that being of a multidirectional float of symbols and meanings, therein developing and reshaping. An individual his/her own identity relates to some communities – not necessarily to one as in the cases described by Cohen [8, 77–87]. He/she accepts certain groups boundaries as important and expresses in his/her identity narration. Revealing his/her identity narrations (during a friends meeting, public speech, protest or rarer today a literary form) he/she takes place in creating these boundaries. It happens both when he/she perceives him/herself as a member of a given community (creates a private face), and when he/she stays outside (he/she can create a public face of a foreign group through stereotypes). The process of interpretation of cultural symbols is multidimensional which means that the active participation of an individual in the creation of group boundaries cannot remain without influence for its identity. Going back to G. H. Mead, we could say that this action on symbols and meanings become elements of individual's experience of him/herself, element of 'me'.

Conceptual Contexts of Social Identity – the Conclusions. Summarizing the presented theories that relate to phenomena associated today with identity, I tried to find the relation between this term and other sociological terms. In this way I wanted to oppose the tendency of reducing all phenomena related to consciousness to only one conceptual category. My goal was not an interpretation of old concepts according to new categories, but opposite – looking among them for some broader conceptual contexts for identity. The result of my reflection is that modern sociological theories of identity are under the influence of at least three methods of describing the social reality. Each of these methods creates its specific conceptual contexts which, although they have common elements, cannot be fully comparable within one theoretical platform. These are their short characteristics:

1. Identity is an objective aspect of personality, with complex character, because it is made up of various social attitudes (attitudes towards oneself). Identity understood in such a way is inconstant as inconstant are social attitudes (this characteristic can be gradual). The identity of an individual can also vary because its of internal complexity (resulting from a number of attitudes that is consists). Such identity does not exist outside of symbolic acts of language (*parole*). Language (*parole*) is not only a form of expressing

identity, but also a form of its existence. Identity is a clearly socially bounded element of personality, created in relation between 'I' and society.

2. Social identity can be also described as a set of attitudes that are strongly related to the participation by an individual in a specific social group. Identity is a conscious effect of this participation. An individual may have many social identities, sometimes very different, if he/she participates in many social groups. Besides imagining him/herself as a member of a group, an individual can imagine also a group and/or an ideal member of the group that is a base to describe a collective identity.

3. Identity is a set of symbols and meanings obtained as an effect of participation in social interactions. It has a significant influence on social organization of communities in which an individual participates. It is related to imagined boundaries of social groups, which, like identities, are constructed from cultural contents. Both identity and the boundaries of social groups are subjects of steady interpretations and reinterpretations in a process of transmitting, maintaining and changing for cultural symbols that compose the images of oneself, community and the others.

In each of these approaches, identity is an element of a larger sphere of consciousness' and social phenomena. Moreover, a range of common assumptions of a more general, although basic character can be extracted out of these three approaches. They can be described as *an unanimous ontological conceptualization of identity*:

1. Identity is an element of individual's consciousness.
2. Identity is an effect of individual participation in social interactions.
3. Identity is expressed in verbal symbolic structures.

The existence of such a universal set of assertions considering the phenomena known today as identity show that in spite of the perceivable change in sociological approach to this issue, it is not a change of ontological axioms describing this reality. On the other hand, mentioned above conceptual sketch is so general, that it does not limit the direction of further analysis nor specific research requirements. In some sense this set of terms and relations among them describes first of all some cognitive frames, and borders that can contain numerous (but rather not unlimited) specific issues. The differences among them do not consider ontological issues but – using the term by Satya P. Mohanty [17, 392] – the epistemic ones. This means, they appeal to the question: how could identity be perceived or described? And the answer depends on what aspects of social reality will be judged as cognitively important (individual vs. common; phenomenological vs. relational; processual vs. structural) or from which perspective the identity has to be approached (the scheme shows at least three such perspectives).

The most important postulate that can be derived from the reflections above is flexibility of theoretical approach. This feature should be understood as using different research perspectives to describe a given social phenomenon – a specific kind of multi-perspective analysis. Three theoretical platforms setting the research directions can be described as follows:

- I. Research direction: Identity as an objective aspect of personality

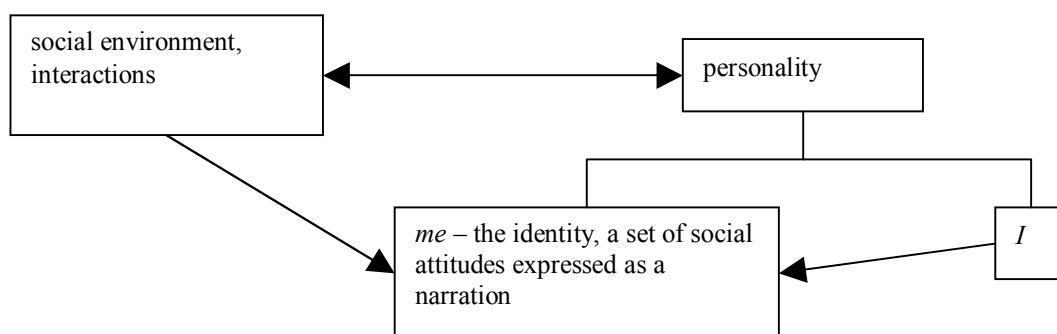


Figure 1. *Identity as an objective aspect of personality*

Research problems: 1. Relations between the identity and the environment and I; 2. Identity's features: grade of changeability and complexity of the identity.

- II. Research direction: The structure of social identities of an individual

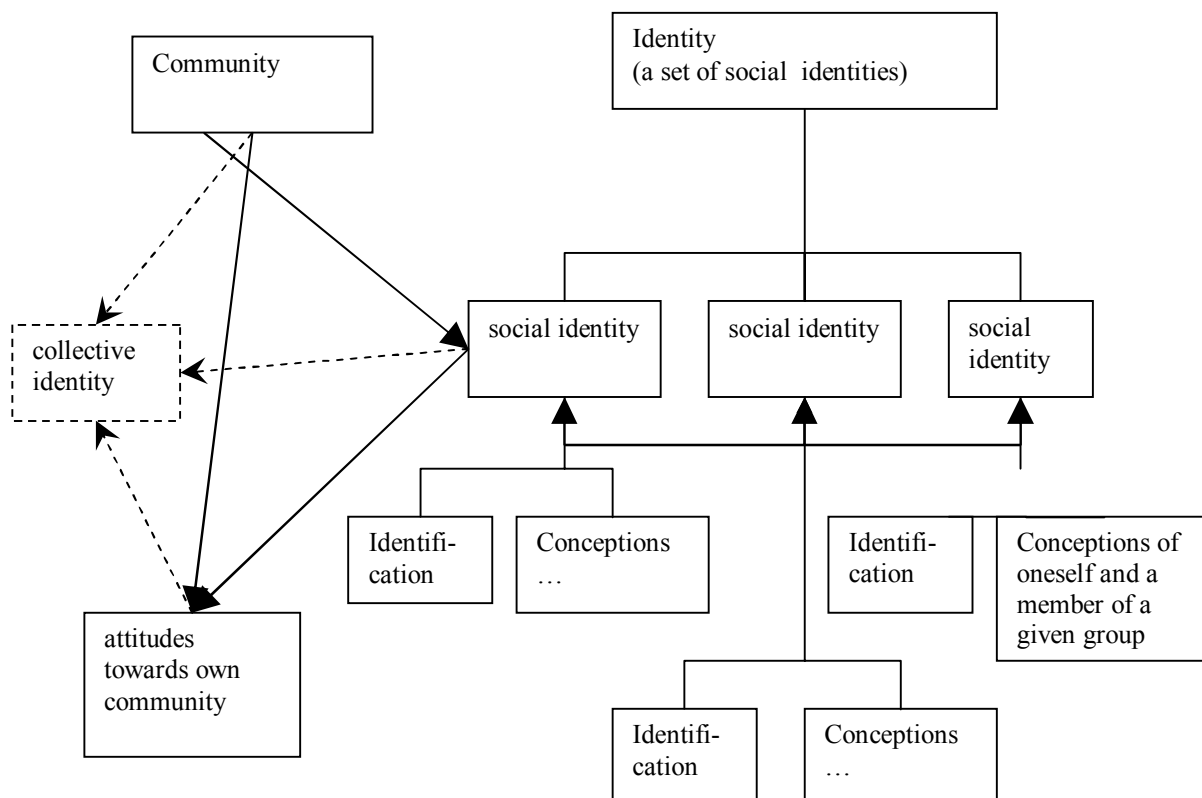


Figure 2. *The structure of social identities of an individual*

Research problems: 1. Relations among various social identities; 2. relation between a specific social identity of an individual and his/her attitudes towards the group; 3. a character of a collective identity and its relation to the attitudes towards the group.

II. Research direction: Process of maintaining and changing the group boundaries and individual identities.

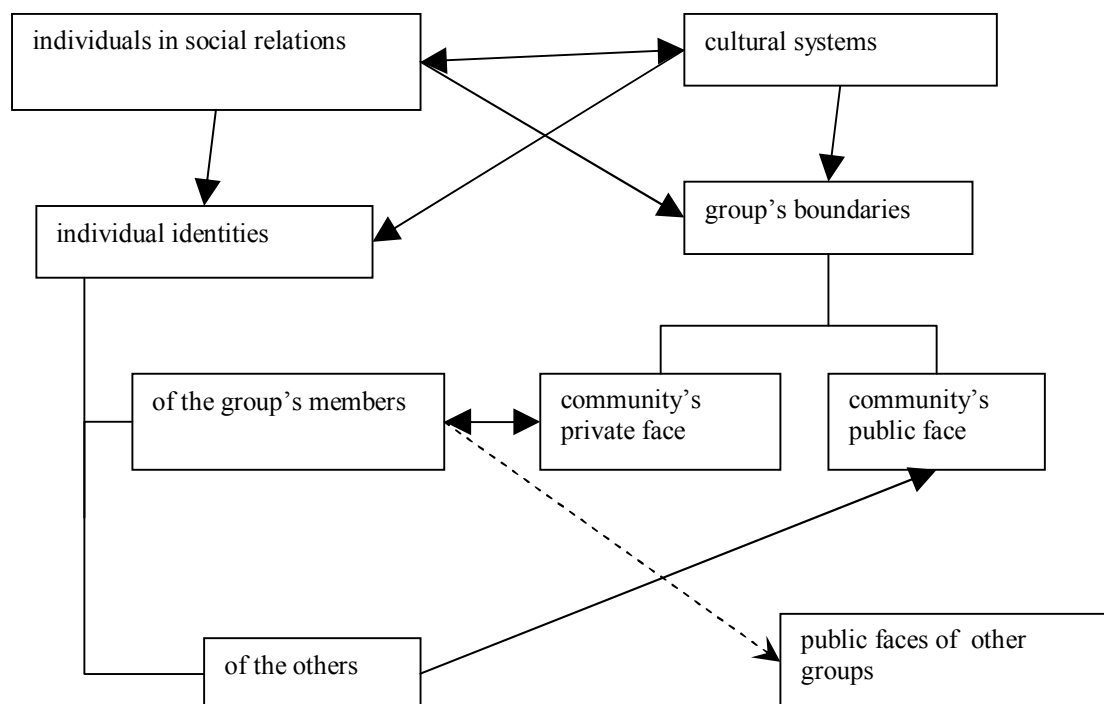


Figure 3. *Process of maintaining and changing the group boundaries and individual identities*

Problems: 1. Relations among identities of the group's members and a private face of the group (community); 2. relation between private and public face; 3. the maintaining of symbols and their common meaning which constitute group boundaries.

These diagrams show only a partial set of optional research problems, which can be considered in relation to the presented above assumptions of the multi-perspective analysis of identity. What is specifically valuable in that approach is the possibility of formulating research problems which appear on the border of those three theoretical platforms. I think that further research will have to be a combination of the conception of many social identities with the theory of group boundaries. From that conceptual combination the following research problems appear: the question of existence of the rules organizing all those symbolic boundaries; the question of hierarchy or structure of such boundaries; the roots of possible differences between group boundaries, and so on. In all those problems the main function of that multi-contextual network appears: it is a tool for understanding and interpreting the social world.

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Вояковский Дариуш. Многоперспективный анализ социальной идентичности. Идентичность – это концепт, ставший преобладающим в современной дискуссии отношений между индивидом и социальным миром. Негативным его аспектом является то, что идентичность начинает доминировать в этих отношениях. В работе сделана попытка решить эту проблему путём представления нескольких перспективных концепции социальной идентичности, которые основаны на теориях, составляющих корни современного социологи-

ческого понимания идентичности, а также некоторые недавние антропологические теории. Выделены три теоретические контексты: идентичность как объективный аспект личности; структура социальной идентичности индивида, а также процесс поддержания и изменения границ группы и отдельных субъектов. Эти контексты отличаются друг от друга и устанавливают различные направления исследований. Но такая концептуальная сетка позволяет лучше понять проблемы идентичности и предоставляет формулирование новых исследовательских задач, появляющихся на границе этих теоретических контекстов.

Ключевые слова: социальная идентичность, личность, социальная роль, границы групп, многоперспективный анализ.

Вояковский Даріуш. Багатоipersпективний аналіз соціальної ідентичності. Концепт ідентичності став переважаючим у сучасній дискусії щодо відносин між індивідом та соціальним світом. Домінування ідентичності у цих стосунках є фактом негативним. У цій роботі запропоновано авторський підхід до розв'язання цього питання через представлення декількох перспективних концепцій соціальної ідентичності, на яких ґрунтується сучасне соціологічне розуміння ідентичності, а також деяких антропологічних теорій. Виділено три теоретичні контексти: ідентичність як об'єктивний аспект особистості, структура соціальної ідентичності індивіда, а також процес підтримання й зміни меж групи й окремих індивідів. Ці контексти значно різняться та встановлюють окремі напрями досліджень. Та все ж така концептуальна сітка дає можливість краще зрозуміти проблеми ідентичності й представляє формулювання нових дослідницьких завдань, які перебувають на перетині цих теоретичних контекстів.

Ключові слова: соціальна ідентичність, особистість, соціальна роль, межі груп, багатоipersпективний аналіз.

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Olga Kuzmuk

Status Consistency / Inconsistency of the Status Position of Social Classes

In this article author explains the class inequality in west and east European societies. Also we compare class differences of EU and NEE countries. Summarized evaluation of aggregate social status in the context of the study of social stratification requires a certain type of cumulative assessment of the status and remuneration of a particular individual. But not always score (reward) adequate of social position. Inconsistency social position and evaluation (reward) is described the concept of «status inconsistency».

In this paper we describe the social inequality and characteristic of social inequality. The main dimensions of social inequality are economic status, education, professional status and political status. Based on the data comparison we implemented generalizations that describe the differences in the nature of social inequality Western European and Eastern European societies.

Key word: social inequality, social class, social status, class scheme, status inconsistency.

Formulation of Research Problem and Significance of it. Social inequality is the basis of stratification of society and is perceived as its main feature. The theory of social stratification reveals the essence of social inequality in such factors as social status, social role and prestige of functionally describing the social structure. Social stratification is considered as a system of social inequality, social differentiation, based on differences in the occupied position and functions performed.

Social inequalities in life chances or opportunities arising from differences in socio-conditioned resources and practices, including: knowledge resources, education, skills, values, language, manners, tastes, information technology etc. and are expressed in the style of life, language, nature of consumption, forms of leisure time and the formation of subject environment.

Status inconsistency is defined as the possibility of mismatching positions of individual in a given fragments of social space (the economic situation, clearly defined professional belonging, administrative and managerial positions).

Analysis of Recent Research on this Issue. According to the theory of M. Weber, stratification situation of any group in accordance with the classical triad is determined by three key positions – class, status and party.