Cultural Identities: Transformation and Recognition

Kostenko, Natalia

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Sammelwerksbeitrag / collection article

Mitglied der

Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

gesis
Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

NATALIIA KOSTENKO,

Doctor of Sciences in Sociology, Leadind Research Fellow of the Department of Sociology of Culture and Mass Communication, Institute of Sociology, NAS of Ukraine

Cultural Identities: Transformation and Recognition[1]

Abstract

Identity legitimacy is regarded as a key issue to understand the current post-communist world and to substantiate the identity recognition policy, that is a legitimate (for society) way of differentiation control. There are presented two ideal models of identity production: 1) based on essentialistic imperatives, and 2) close to constructivism in its various versions, like post-classical one. There are analyzed significant practices and figurative representations applied to identities.

The Politics of Recognition

The "legitimation of identities" is rather a question for politics than theory. It is historical circumstances that have endowed it with the rank of a key issue in understanding of the contemporary "post-colonial" world. The magistral formulation of the question appeals to identities, basing the social differences and putting forward arguments in favour of the policy of their recognition, that is, a socially legitimate method to control differentiation. In this context, the political and social interests are primarily targeted at differences, radical, irrevocable, creating not only socially troublesome tension, but also dramatic collisions and severe ethnic, gender, racial, religious and sexual orientation conflicts. In

---

other words, those one cannot neglect after the fall of empires, where the basis of power displays the dominants of compulsory Eurocentrism.

The major provisions of the recognition policy, intensely discussed since the late 1970s and presented in a programme-like way by Charles Taylor in his essay "The Politics of Recognition", are encouraged by the persistency of legitimate practical solutions in favour of minorities (ethnic formations, alternative groups, different forms of feminism, etc.) and promoting the multiculturalism policy. In this sense, to legitimate identities means to confirm the rights of the historically repressed realities, either agreeing their definitions to a norm or expanding and specifying the idea about the norm. Since "identities" are meant to be something liked the denotation of "what we are", our fundamental characteristics as human beings, it would be necessary to release them, in a regulatory way, from the label of social inequality which they have got in the social and political present-day world. "The thesis is, — Charles Tailor formulates, — that partly our identity is formed by recognition, or its absence, and often — by means of distorted understanding of others. Therefore, such a person or group can be caused real damage, if people or society view them in a restricted, senseless or contradictory light. Non-recognition or under-recognition... can be a form of oppression that confines someone in the framework of a false, distorted and restricted method of being" [34, p. 225].

A simple, for common perception, postulate is not yet an evidence for the policy that signifies social equations and differences. Social recognition as a goal for "identity politics", apart from all other things, also has an ethnic measurement, since the social space, in which identities pretend to have their legal place, is also a moral geography so well diagnosed by E.Goffman in his "Stigma" [19]. And this imposes certain responsibilities not only on the legitimising party, but the claimants as well: they should call for recognition, as they are convinced of its social legality. This can be done by social movements the voices of which are heard by politicians. In the case of cultural identities being the subject of our interest, the legitimation modes may be different and much more multiple. They may include silence and uncertain reactions or mutual non-sensitivity by both parties — the subject and the surroundings. However, this does not seem surprising, since the identities' discourse is shifted towards culture, all possible disproportion of it, identities, ontology and epistemology become most obvious.

Meanwhile, from the experience of the "identities policy" formation in "cultural studies", all things occurring to cultural identities and around

them — the efforts of their displaying or imagining them as unwavering, their transformation, mutations, threats of irreversible change or suppression in the background of global and local social changes, eventually the construction and crystallisation of the newest samples in the most recent time — are quite often considered in terms of "struggle", "resistance", "protest" and at best, the "rethink" of the strategies of their description. That is, the basis of legitimation presumed by the "identities policy" are, due to different motivations including inertia, quite often transferred to those cultural areas where other different recognition mechanisms work. In turn, a response to that is the criticism of the present direction of "cultural studies" for methodological eclecticism and too populist interpretations of identities, and stimulates speculations on theoretical and empirical prospects of studying various cultural realms [16].

It may be assumed that the contemporary sociological reflex to identity has already revealed itself enough — both as individual standpoints and fragments of authorities' discourse, and within independent directions and schools that have dedicated special investigations to the new identities issue. These issues seem to have reached their peak in the middle of the last decade [31; 32]. However, it is far from being complete, especially in those cases when the attempts of conceptualisation are combined with the practical cognition of transforming societies that give an impressive material to the issue of the status of social and cultural groups.

Let us take just the two most common remarks of the nature that makes political interest in the problem relative to the social. First, it is the modality, persistently declaring itself, to overcome the legacy of the present day in understanding identities and differences. Second, it is a matter of legitimation, from which neither politics not culture can deviate, since identity is ontologically inseparable from recognition. Although our conversation about its cultural forms and mechanisms would require at least listing those major lines of non-resoluteness which will not leave the identity discourse any opportunity to get levelled and fade away.

Incommensurabilities

Semantic career

"An identity remains unclear until it has no a space in the world", — says Berger [1, p. 281]. The spatial parameters of identities are negotiated as something that goes without saying, as a fact of presence, and

knowledge about it is equal to recognition. Identity claims accommodation, and somebody must agree that its claims are well-grounded. In the contemporary world, it is always problematic, despite the seeming easiness of the procedure itself. A pattern of pretentiousness today is acquiring a website.

Conversely, the temporal characteristics denoted by the concept "identity" badly debase the clarity one would like to use with in any contexts. According to the genteel clarification by Paul Ricoeur, the semantic ambiguity of the notion "identity" occurs owing to at least Latin that originates a simultaneous and invincible reference to two roots — *ipso* and *idem*. Both impose an equation related to the subject for discussion, however the former indicates *continuity and steadiness in time* (equation to yourself) and the latter — *sameness* (equation as similarity). In essence, "one's thinking has to do with the idea of an identity in which two meanings are mixed: the identity to yourself (selfness) and that as being the same" [6, p. 20]. The whole problem is how one could manage to think of the same selfness, by going beyond the category of substance and the relevant judgement patterns, and by placing this selfness in the real lifelong contexts — cultural, social, political ones. In addition, the double equation latent to understanding creates unending tension between the individual and the collective, the unique and the categorical, the internal and the external, since the first sense, treated to transparency, implies a certain singleness in subject, as the second refers to a norm, type or class, or at least a pattern.

Semantic disproportion all the time pursues the concept of identity in every theory-making and every policy-making that move identity to the focus. Even when there is no argument over words, and the commonly shared understanding of identity is taken for granted, ambiguity of the name casts its shadow. Although, in a lost connection too, it is always present in the culturological descriptions of "identity-genesis", which according to Zigmund Bauman was conceived as a problem and can exist solely as a problem denoting nothing else but an attempt to escape uncertainty. Actually, it is possible to be absolutely sure of how one can find its place among the obvious variety of behaviour styles and patterns, and how one can make sure that people would consider this place right and due? [11, p.19]. Or, according to the well-known quotation by William James who as early as in 1890 believed "personal identity" to be one of the four Self attributes — if "I have as many selves as there are persons who recognize me", then how can my self also recognize itself as "the same today as it was yesterday"? [25, p. 173, 176].

The uncertainty to which the ego responds with an identity is backed by extraordinary correlations between subjectivity and the cultural position calling up the individual. From the experience of classic "I-concepts", it is most habitual to link the identity to searching for a way by which the numerous requirements for the "social ego" are passionately processed in the maw of selfness. But what can be done to those today's examples where an identity comes up from a series of individual political or cultural events and shortly, as it seems, goes after them. Throughout the evening, a TV channels more than once recognised you to be "its viewer", a consumer of "its information", and along with that — a participants of a 'bouillon cubes' promo. However, in a week, a change in the political intonation of broadcasting would leave little of your loyalty, and the community-imagined "audience of this channel's news bulletin" you had identified with would shatter. Along with that, the virtual union of soup supplement lovers may not be damaged, legitimising its members by another source.

Paradoxically, partly due to the polysemous character, the semantic career has lead identity to all-roundness, as a tool allowing one not only to identify, but also clearly structure reality in time and space, emphasise it and restore its certainty. That is rather a kind of certainty of procedure than of content, the certainty to mark, give people, things and relations legalised or negotiated names. And a concept cannot be wished to have a better destiny, when most of the fundamental notions, by means of which one wants to express the rules of a global and local games, are not any more burdened with a supervision by parental paradigms and set their own prospects of reflex, when these particular paradigms appear mutually penetrable, and the thought is constantly rectified by "positive" requirements for transparency as a substitute for the truth, being interrupted by all possible references and context specifications. Of course, it is possible not to abandon this notion, assuming that it is unable to achieve categorical crystalness, and that it is every time compelling one to reconstruct the links between the fields of knowledge, types of normativeness and forms of subjectivity in individual cultures — it is an unattainable objective of a Michel Foucault in his "The Use of Pleasure" [18]. Or, on the contrary, to outline the "identity" ambitions by the past experience of psychoanalysis and role theory. But how then do we picture that cultural relation, shaky and inseparable, that arises among legalised differences or collapses within the legitimate equation? Probably, it is that kind of thinking when unlike the classic pattern with its typical "pure sequence of visions" "in the basis of the history of things

and the historicity of man one finds remoteness undermining the Identical, one finds a disruption that dispels and re-concentrates it in two polar points" [8, p. 360–361].

The concept of identity is from this kind of vocabulary. It is used to capture cultural disruptions, for example by expressing the essence of identities by the metaphor of a "suture", a "meeting point" of the subject, discursive flow and structures of notion [24, p.106]. "I use 'identity' to refer to the meeting point, the point of *suture*, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to "interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses on the one hand, and the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken' on the other hand. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us" [21, p. 5–6]. It is understood that the bilateral provision of such a "suture" technology between the already complicated components, as well as the differences between time intervals, in the gap between which this "suture" remains protruding and visible, hardly guarantees an exclusively steady result. The possibility of its variableness and unevenness is crucially important. How do identities comprise the features of steadfastness and volatility, how do the prospects of *possessing, belonging and disruption* cross over? A probable way out is the production of oneself as a project.

Beyond essentialism

Of course, the latter requires explanations. The nature of identity is interpreted in different ways by the scientific approaches dealing with it. On the whole, the ambivalence of the question is clear, since historically and strategically, there is a competition of two ideal models of identity production [31; 32]. One is formed by the imperatives of essentialism, the other is closer to constructivism in its different, especially post-classic versions.

First model presumes that any identity has a certain intimate, essential, authentic contents determined by a known cultural origin or a common cultural experience. An identity is constructed as an extract of all of what is "organically inherent" to its carrier. It is naturalness that ensures integrity and holism to the identity, provides its permanent reproduction. Consequently, it is quite easy to imagine its self-legitimation by a natural attitude as to one completely mature, separate, different from others, or on the same basis — legitimation from aside. In equal measure this relates to both individual and collective subjectivity forms.

Conversely, the *second model* never considers identity as the steady core of selfness and articulates the impossibility of such an integral, harmonious, forever-given identity. Identities are constructed in the interaction between different, sometimes contradicting each other discourses, practices and positions within discursive formations which only generally determine "what can and must be said" (Foucault). Inevitably, such constructs are multiple, fragmental, being in the continuous process of change and transformation. Therefore identity is a temporary, relative, incomplete construct, having the ontological status of a project or postulate. It is always imperfect knowledge about yourself and yet unachieved adequate recognition by others. For instance, explains Craig Calhoun, — "being Jewish is always a project (or occasion for resistance) for every modern Jewish individual and community, even if stereotypes about how to be Jewish are maintained or presented as fixed by anti-Semites or the ultra-orthodox" [15, p. 27]. The same is true for any ethnic identity, as well as for any cultural identity at all — how to be a modern Ukrainian (French, Serb, Chechen) or, suppose, how to be an intelligentsia, Orthodox or Catholic person, a "modern young man" identified by age frameworks in mass surveys, eventually — a reader, music fan, "real man" or "real woman", consumer of environmentally-friendly products. Identity is postulated as a "critical projection of what is demanded and/or sought upon what is", and to be more exact, as an "oblique assertion of the inadequacy or incompleteness of the latter" [11, p. 19].

To accept this model means to also have doubts about the relevance of the collective identity concept, understood as the "essence" or a certain set of special features shared solely by the members of a given community and nobody else. Demonstrating all the complexity of the relationship between the subject, social norms and personal resources, the post-structural prospect also insists on the full sorting of "metaphysical" categories of identity, leaving it the only one constituent opportunity — via Differences [17]. This appeal is also supported beyond theoretical discourse — the question of identity is a demonstrative case of mutual challenges of theory and politics — for example by black women and lesbians, who see the bias of the female movement and feminist theories cultivating identity of gender in favour of the experience of the whites and heterosexuals [10].

It would be wrong to assume that the "essentialist" categories and rhetoric, exposed to radical criticism and deconstruction now are just a historical stage in the comprehension of identity. In that measure, in which the claims of tradition on genuineness and indecomposable

source remain valid, various appeals to "essence" principally non-discredited by any "phenomena" may be successful and demanded. Especially, when these "essences" were devalued in the dominant discourse. Methodological support to social constructivism is not excluded. The language of "naturalness" is definitely not foreign to the morphological modelling of social structure or the substantiation of the dysfunction of "deviant behaviour" as a deviation from norm or a role pattern. No doubt, though the processes of socialization are considered here quite important, they are not the only one mechanism that constitutes identity. But who will dare state out that the temptation of "pure subsequence" has gone out without trace, and there is no slightest risk to deny the wilfulness of cultural practices or lifestyles, subordinating them to the orders of "social nature" and arranging them to "social categories"? A psychoanalytical argument in support of integral identity, from frustrating it inclinations to pathological differences, can also be significant — despite the fact that it is psychoanalysis that has placed an emphasis on achieving an identity in the process of evolvement.

As Donna Haraway has correctly remarked, an opposition between essentialism and constructivism is often deployed as the strengthening of the "nature-culture" dilemma [22]. Having strengthened in the battle for sciences differentiation in anticipation of modernism and then having experienced the cleansing of the past century now, the dilemma has driven its horns in the public perplexity over the prospects of both. It is unthinkable to transform it to irreparable aporia, for this case bearing in mind that the production of identities is carried out on the crossing of the psychic and the disciplinary within historically grounded discoursive formations.

Historical citizenship project

It is considered that identity is an invention of the modern, though its distant ancestors had something to tell about it. Its history presented in various expanded and brief versions was more than once described, indicating differences in cultural patterns of subjectivity production in different epochs [11; 14; 30 et al.]. The modern has offered it something rather substantial — a citizenship project.

The identity discourse is possible in many aspects due to the rise of individualism late in 18th — early in 19th centuries, and the task to take normative care of self-construction under the conditions of "the new discipline of power" (Foucault) which has demanded of the individual a different qualification in their claim on approved of and socially significant

acts. Not only the right for an economic sovereignty of bourgeois, not only the literary romanticisation of the *ego* have projected the building of identities. The special social and political mission of the individual has revealed itself as the fact of having enjoying the full right for participation in the expression of the "common will", in the institute of citizenship of a nation state, which is being constructed. The individual and the collective identities have closed up, linked up with a mutual responsibility for social outcome. On the one hand, the idea of self-sufficient identity has strengthened as either the Cartesian *cogito* or "I am I" by Fichte and the subsequent German tradition that eventually hardened the ideal of the fixed and reflexing at its own expense integral individuality. At the same time, the self-sufficiency of the individual turned out to be equivalency to a citizen, whose legitimate identity had gathered around the belonging to community, levelling whatever non-relative differences. As it was shortly clarified — as early as late in the 18th century, this golden age of publicity — the "selfness" of a legal agent of the market or a full member of public debates was embodied by a free man, well-off in the first case, and educated and speaking the nation's predominant language in the other. The history presented for consideration of politics was constructed as that of the advancing identity, progressively moving towards totality (having gone the whole path from "a class within itself" to "a class for itself", in terms of radical version), not as a history of differences.

Later on, while regarding it as a technology for production of such an identity, social science would substantiate the socialisation specially directed towards the cognition of a system of values and patterns needed for consecutive normative actions or competent involvement in the public area. Understanding, inspired by the liberal modern, even today has loads of reasons to rise above the expenditures of the coupled individual and social identities, having set a division between the private and the system worlds, and pinning great hopes to the emancipated force of communication, the idea of human rights and law as such. In this case, it is possible that the differences can retain their status of epiphenomenal. "The identity formation in most patterns — for example including the known theory by Habermas about the public sphere, — Calhoun remarks, — prepares the individual for coming up at the public arena. It gives them their individual strength and individual opinion. In the opposite way, the public sphere appeals to us to put aside the differences of class, ethnicity and gender for a conversation on equals terms. Therefore, these differences in themselves are impossible to thematise as ob-

jects of politics instead of seeing in them obstacles to overcome before the rationally politically formation of collective will" [15, p. 3].

Over time, the perfectness of the figures of universal selfness that is not sensitive towards differences was cast great doubts on, even still lit up by the state flag. The only one for all equal ones citizenship project was dispersed, ceasing to focus that which is due for the social individual. In the wake of the world wars of the 20th century, there came up an abundance of samples of how a separate identity would in itself be legitimated by a genuine passion of social movement and political protest. This became possible in the period of crucial cultural shifts, which is normally used, as Charles Lemert does, to base a historical interpretation: "Identity, including identity politics and its expressions in the new social movements, is today a social fact arising from the collapse of the Western Imperium and the subsequent collapse of its well-exercised theory of world culture" [29, p. 125]. Anti-colonial nationalism in Asia and Africa, civil rights protection in the USA, youth counterculture in the Western countries, the growing feminism, activeness of sexual groups, environmental movements, etc., as well as the aggressive repulsion of all of these, have comprehensively displayed the state of segmentation of the historically organised social spaces, the shakiness, mobility of social positions, subjects that recruit and those who originate in them the idea of contending.

On the post-soviet cultural territories, the identity constructed in a "voluntarily-compulsive" mode has notably deformed, though never completely. The late 20th century culture permitted of both. Under pressure of social and economic facts changed by the political practices, both institutionalised and current, the totality split, exfoliated or dispersed. However, via fragments, scars or a fresh trace, and in some areas also — a fixed assembly centre of subjectivity, it is certainly present in the structure of the multiplied identities, inspiring their fluctuations and circulations. In our case, the modern citizenship project is not really complete. But every movement in its frameworks is not any more the leading normative regulator of self-identifications and recognition. It is built in other different projections of "we" and "others", those which unavoidably or accidentally catch up with us.

Cultural transformations

It is the predomination of either unavoidability or accidentalness that the essence of change lies in identity patterns. Not that today's identity

would appear an absolutely uninhibited play or, according to Douglas Kellner, a "theatrical presentation of Self", in radical turns threatening a loss of control [27]. Although, it is the growing evidence of this particular thing that is indicated by the unrestrained success of any advertisement, any "performative ego" to mark possession of cultural quality. Yet it is more important to speak of a severe difference between the identities created and strengthened by the modern and those of present-day culture called the post-modern.

In reality, the rules of self-construction subjectivity are incommensurable throughout history. Foucault has convincingly proven a flat dependence of cultural practices on the effective in a cultural period ethical paradigms, researching how the types of morale of the first centuries AD produced quite different from the prescriptions of the following epochs modalities attitudes to Self, "another type of working on Self" that obliged one "both to the interpretation of soul and the cleansing hermeneutics of desire". "The care of Self" was subjected to a general law predetermining the ethic substance in terms of finiteness, the fall and the evil, and the ethical ideal — not only inclining to self-denial, but also to the fulfilment of "the will of one's personal god". Though individual samples of self-practising could have been similar and seem to repeat themselves during a far longer period of time, this should not mislead one concerning the principal differences of cultural epochs, since such similar samples were being built in different normativeness modes. Thus, let us say "elements of the code on the economy of pleasures, spousal faithfulness and relationships between men may just as well remain analogical. Consequently, Foucault concludes, they belong to profoundly reworked ethics and an absolutely different way of constructing oneself as a moral subject of one's sexual behaviour" [8, p. 257–258].

It may be said that the identity maturing in production oneself as a subject and object for the world was always constructed as a project covering a number of positions. But most likely, only the farewell speech of the modern communicated to it an impressive impulse of creativity and striving for integrity. Which actually gave the opportunity to link actualisation of identities to the modern. At first, it is in the cultural modern that symbolised what is called New time, that a release from the antique past occurs. Having set the antique to be the classics, the modern, starting with the Enlightenment, it ultimately moved it over an insurmountable distance and turned it to something historically irreversible, being fond of the idea of infinite progress and movement to the better in the social and moral areas [9]. At second, as Max Weber has indicated, New

time displays a historically prepared differentiation of the value-related spheres of science, morale and art which, according to a plot by the Enlightenment continues to move along their own trail, though being united with the sole imperative — serving in the name of a reasonable organisation of living conditions. A cultural identity, claiming the right to be a representative of "the headstrong Enlightenment", to express its subjectivity and practise it, was being formed by attaining rationality and duty, which is able to bridle any deviation from onward movement. Each of the institutionalised value areas postulated its own criteria for the legitimation identities via the truthfulness of cognition, justice or taste, but self-recognition was built on the only ground — from an assessment of one's own diligence in convergence to the creed.

It is unnecessary to make a sophisticated conclusion to articulate the vanity of reproduction of classic patterns of modern subjectivity and its objectivation at present. "The Enlighteners like Condorcet still enjoyed being far too assured that art and science would facilitate not only conquering nature, but also understanding the world and man, the perfection of morale, the justice of social institutes and even human happiness. The XX century has not spared this optimism", — Habermas points out [9, p. 45]. It is not a cultural failure of the modern it would have lost to modern culture that is meant. According to Habermas, who brilliantly spoke in response to his Adorno Prize, the project of the modern has not run out of its resources, whatever many might think. 20th century has ultimately legalised cultural "modernism" as an aesthetic gesture by the modern that gives way to the freedoms of art yet since the middle of the previous century. Certainly, it happened on fulfilment of two conditions of cultural differentiation, at least: the institutionalisation of the works-of-art market and an increase in the gap between the cultures of artists and experts on the one hand, and the general public on the other [9, p. 47]. Now the unending polemics over the pro and contra of the post-modern is not so important as the fact that the main features of contemporary culture are identified in a quite comparable way by even the best-known opponents. Whether we would either denote the state of contemporary culture as the modified modernism, in the understanding of which one should listen in to the recommendations of legitimate scientific knowledge, or whether we would consider it to have radically broken with the promises of the modern and anticipated its best art mezanscenes long before tempting daily life with them, it is not the point. It is the changed rules of the being of culture and individual subjectivity

within the most recent time which still cares for an illicit or legal reference to the lost integrity.

To simplify the understanding of the question, it should be seen in terms of the Bauman's expressiveness: *"the identity problem" in the cultural modern was how to construct it, retaining unyielding and steady, "the identity problem" in the post-modern is how to avoid fixation and leaving choice open.* If the slogan of modernity was *"creation"*, the chef medium that in itself was a "message" of the modern, — a *photograph,* "non-erasable identity", and the main construction materials — the firmness-making *steel and concrete*, the post-modern has other different symbols — *"recycling",* multiple-use *videotape, bio-destroyable plastic* [11, p. 18].

The transmutation was not unexpected or unobserved. The fruit of radical autonomisation of the cultural sphere yet at the turn of the 20th century appeared the rupture of cultural practices from those universal "bases" on which they had been built — from the correspondence of notions to the real world, morale taken for granted or the canons of realism as a privilege of quattrocento in painting, consonance in music and the externally aligned narrative structure in literature. The consequence for cultural practices, as Scott Lash generalises, was *probableness* and *factualness* — what Weber called "*Eigengesetzlichkeit*" which means self-legitimateness. That is, in absence of legitimation by "basis" or legitimation from outside cultural practice in scientific disciplines and art should have developed their private rules and their own conditions of well-groundedness. Before long, something like that also revealed itself in social areas and everyday experiences [28, p. 203–210]. Trying to find non-trivial arguments for the proof of structural correspondences between the aesthetic and social areas, Lash hints at a number of parallels: 1) the alienation of history and historical style in academic painting and architecture along with the de-centricity of the national identity; 2) the destruction of the steady feeling of space and time in the experience of art and that of urbanisation — railways, factory mode, open urban spaces, etc.; 3) the opening of the unconscious and attention to instinct as entering accident to the world of order; 4) a challenge to the bourgeois identity which suddenly caught sight of the lower classes that placed themselves on boulevards and at department stores, having left the traditional ghettos. "In painting public outing in parks, cafe-concerts, and common prostitutes instead of great and idealized historical figures, Manet, Seurat, and others were painting, no longer the ordered, but the contingent" [28, p. 209]. The avant-garde of the century's beginning was

the means by which chance drove art further and further from the referent, thus producing an endless, hence timeless game. But it was not enough for the post-modern. Video equipment coming up becomes "surrealism without the unconscious", as Frederic Jameson has called it [26]. A total disappearance of the referent or self-reference was required, side by side with the enjoyable decentration of the subject, a transformation of modernism styles to codes of factual insignificance, and eventually — the linguistic fragmentation of social life in general. The modern, remembering the "bases", backed down.

The sociological description of transformations observed in the production of subjectivity is in a very close connection with the advice from Berger and Luckmann on how to avoid "the deceptive idea of a collective identity, while not making use of the uniqueness of individual existence" [1, p. 280]. As a matter of fact, identity was initially formulated by consciousness and practice as an individual task and individual project which, however, does not emerge beyond cultural, that is — general grounds. As subjectivity confirmed by culture, it can be most successfully embodied in a cultural type or cultural image, using it to structure cultural positions. For example, in a comparison of the identity of the modern and contemporariness, the well known things are the Bauman images of life strategies "from pilgrim to tourist", registering changes in the spatial-temporal structure of subjectivity and their influence on the conventions of self-recognition and social ideal, perception and utilitarian activities [11].

A *"pilgrim"* travels in time, and to him, the overcoming of space is a function of time. He is still not where he belongs, all the time located at a certain distance from the true destination, the distance being the time necessary to cover it. Unlike the hermit of early Christianity, who chose the desert as a land of self-creation, the protestant ethics prescribed one to be a pilgrim, being in the world and considering this world to be the desert one has to built on sense. In this kind of work, identity is constructed, therefore both identity and the world need their senses simultaneously. They cognise these senses by means of each other, defining life as movement to a certain goal, towards the future which is always "postponed" and is not yet reached. The world of identity-building pilgrims must be aligned, determined, predictable and goodness-oriented, so that the results of the past travels are not lost. This is a stable world, where identity is built of one's own accord, but it is built all the time and systematically — level by level, brick by brick. This is the world of the modern.

Contemporariness is not anymore hospitable for pilgrims. Time stopped to be a stream, and fragmented into a series of episodes to lose by the ongo-

ing rules. It turned into the lasting present, therefore the future is not subject to control, and there is no need to be responsible for it. The world thus produced has nothing eternal or stable anymore — the Weber profession as "a calling" or romantic love "forever" — it is to fit the emerging actuality. The play of life gathers speed, so there is no more time for the development of the only self-project, and another problem is how to slip away from fixedness, remaining prepared for further action. The environment overloaded with information has a chance to catch only shocking messages to immediately forget one, leaving room for a new one. The post-modern situation has changed the pilgrim in two crucial aspects. First, the styles previously practised by marginals turn to the predominant style of social life, second — these styles do not become the result of a choice because life under the contemporary conditions is too disorderly and disagreeable to fir it in one particular coherent pattern. The pilgrim's followers are the *"stroller"* safely involved in the minidrama he plays by himself — as a shopper or TV viewer — not causing damage to the people around, and therefore not afraid of the aftermath of his acts, the "*vagabond*" not having a destination or belonging, the "*tourist*" being all the time in search of experience and aestheticising everyday life, the "*player*" for whom the world is an alternation of games as individual provinces of sense, self-postulated and closed to other small universes. As the result of various inversions, for each of the new pilgrims dependence is not resolved in the temptation of freedom, and freedom all the time searches for dependence [11].

The sociologically reflecting authors of the post-modern primarily see change in identity patterns as little-promising moral consequences. For example, Baudrillard speaks of the world as of perfect crime — a crime without a criminal, victims and motivations [12]. The present-day life strategies endow human relations with fragmentariness and a short life, they increase the distance between the individual and The Other, including The Other in its space rather based on the principle of an aesthetic, not moral assessment, that is, as a matter of taste, not responsibility. It is known that tolerance is not recognition. Although, self-reference does not require it, and cultural identity is pleased with making itself legitimate.

But is it really so self-sufficient and sovereign, and could it be that a mutual lack of interest is one of the mechanisms of mutual legitimate work? To what extent the modern-cultivated intention of recognition remains transformation-resistant, and how it embodies itself in the present-day signifying practices are subjects for a special discussion.

Signifying practice

The legitimation of identity as a unit already having a name would eventually mean its repression, if the name is a prescription for a cultural position, and it is necessary for one to satisfy its requirements. In all times it has been what culture and individuality paid for alignment. Identity, as a world-self-project, as something that has not been ultimately named and remains just probability-related, needs a different kind of groundedness. It needs a distinction of its claim on "being in becoming" because it cannot be indistinct. This is a paradox, but it will be always differentiated by name, not covering the whole that field of the opportunities it comprises. By itself, it would not precisely determine its own dimensions. That is, the recognition by the environment that begins with knowledge about it, as well as self-recognition all the time, becomes problematic for identity, which straightens or breaks its tracks. Moreover, another problem is the coherence between any acknowledgements on its account, which is as a rule guided by norm. Under the conditions of cultural polyvalence, identity hardly aspires to consensus with imperatives which remains to hang out at the distant approaches. It is enough to have the current fit and fragile accord between mutual expectations from the cultural partnership.

It never means that prescriptions have absolutely lost their regulatory properties. But they have been significantly purged by a precedent that strengthens the authority of a rule-maker. *Legitimation on prescription* used to institutionally control the relation to cultural norm is more and more frequently restrained by *legitimation by fact*, impressive with its efficiency and productivity, that is identity presumption based on cultural experience. This is not surprising under the circumstances when the institute of culture is mainly embodied in the form of television — the unyielding manufacturer of factualness by its own rules which do not coincide with the mechanisms of prescriptions, but which begin to function as if they were such. It is a particular case of what Luckmann reveals regarding the replacement of normativeness with the laws of procedures effectiveness in post-industrial communities, and Lyotard would call in particular "legitimation by fact", since a success of "context control" — the social, political or cultural context — is substantiated by obvious outcome [4, p. 102–115]. The more technologically advanced television, the more self-evident reality it constitutes with all its identities, and the more audiences' expectations such a reality produces and controls.

Predisposition to both types of legitimation is ontologically stipulated in the identity project and is corrected by different discursive practices

in which it is involved. Since the social links, in which identity builds itself, are a web of language links, the identity construction occurs *within or in the process of discourse*, being subordinate to the mode they have elaborated. In historically special discursive formations, the ratio between these two types of legitimation will be different. In addition, a dominant discourse or an institutional culture has usually preferred to be guided by the former, working in favour of the system, while conversely, pragmatic everyday life has always reckoned with fact. Thus, there is a variety of combinations of legitimating order, few of which become leading in practice. In a way it also depends on how prepared or transparent are the grounds of recognising identity as something like separateness and distinctiveness from all other things. Constituted by a project, identity simultaneously postulates its external environment. To claim singleness is only possible *through differences*, though not being beyond them, only through being related to what is not among one's own resources, through being related to The Other. Identity is constructed as a reference to what it is not, to the 'otherness' it produces and relates to. The process is mutual for the subject and the surroundings, be it nameless, imaginary or real. In the aspiration to incorporate oneself in the structure of The Other, and vice versa, to possess The Other as a needful thing or an accidental source of recognition, there is an *impulse of power*, an attempt of control, and consequently — legitimation. In its claim, identity legitimates the external world, from which it craves for recognition. In its turn, the surrounding also uses gestures of power, discriminating identities as the marking of inequipotentiality and legalising them as such. In any case, to be differentiated, identity should be presented and denoted.

The projective frame of subjectivity rests on the idea of rather becoming than existing and uses the whole stock of history, language and culture to express it: "not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', but what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves" [21, p. 4]. Consequently, identities are constituted *"within"*, not *"beyond" the representation* by which they claim recognition — legal or cultural legitimation. There is at least a few major mechanisms in control of this process, or signifying practices — identification, performative, narrative. And each of them can be seen as an independent prospect, which would include all the others. Therefore, mentioning them one by one is tentative to some extent.

Identification

Identification is one of the most habitual for sociological perception signification mechanisms. As a rule, it is an act of attributing oneself or others to an already established body (group, class, "social entity") or ideal (norm, image) on the basis of commonly shared characteristics and solidarity, emerging in this connection. In this case identity presents itself through the "*idem*" — the "highly similar" to its congruent, through conceptualisation and a sensation of "us" as opposed to "them" or "all others", legitimating belonging to a category. For a discursive approach to understanding identity, identification never means the "natural" groundedness of attribution to a community originated by a single origin. Conversely, this is a process of constructing that never ends, a process of the identity produced responding to the changing or remaining the subsistence, to the re-structuration of social and cultural areas. Seemingly, even such a "natural" identity of sex is not constituted by a absolutely biological status. According to Judith Butler, "Sex is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a 'regulatory ideal'. In this sense, then, sex not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces (through the repetition or iteration of a norm which is without origin) the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce — demarcate, circulate, differentiate — the bodies it controls … sex is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time" [10. p. 1].

The representation of belonging by any means — acts to symbols — requires an articulation of connection with a quite concrete or imaginary, ideal, fantasised community. As any articulation, it is always a minor exaggeration, some overestimation, "the absence of the due fit" — in this case — to unity. The unannounced residue will certainly declare itself, destabilising identification, hinting at the tentativeness of the articulation play, its chance or what Derrida has called *differance*. The typical of identification ambivalence also comes from the fact that it can be manifested simultaneously for a number of objects and require the legitimation of identity within different and perhaps, contradictory discourses.

Performativeness

As a mechanism to produce statements equivalent to action, performativeness is built in different signifying practices. This is not just a message "from the first person", but a scenery, presenting oneself, one's own presentation. Its special role in constructing identity is to perform self-legitimation, the basis of which has a self-reference, imparting a

name to yourself as an act of waywardness or desire. Like the Declaration of Independence in Derrida's deconstruction, which by itself remains the creator and guarantee of its own signature: "…the signature gives itself a name. It allows *itself* credit, *its* own credit, loaning itself *to itself…* "The only swoop" establishes law, bases law, imparts law, *gives birth to law*" [2, p. 179–180].

In reality, performative is not always distinct from statement, and this plain cunning of identity is able to confuse and intrigue a presumable source of external recognition. The legalised advertisement of the media culture has delivered identity from the need to trick, having produced a refined sample of self-reference as publicity. In its compulsory performativeness, advertising is already able to tempt one with power — an excessive interlocutory force, the unappealing broadcasting of itself by means of images, symbols, ideas, slogans, etc. The advertisement mechanisms are transferred over any forms of publicity controlled by the media, and infect the public area with the self-sufficiency of claims. Ideally, the contemporary identity is striving to capture the brand status, that is — such an image compared to which, according to Baudrillard, the object has not any privileges and is all the time in combinatory relation to it [13, p. 115]. Performative must not any more meet the "success conditions", as J.Austin thought. Political identities, according to very common observations, do not tale the trouble to comply with this requirement. The contemporary Ukrainian experience shows that, for instance, they quite often use casual, irrelevant speeches in public debates and produce the self-legitimation of a negative or ironical manner, thus demonstrating that their "genuine" recognition takes place not here, but in the framework of another, cosy discourse of power. But of course, not during election campaigns, when the promotion of a political brand is the most crucial condition for contending.

Narrative

Phenomenological sociology proved long ago that social life is also narrated life, therefore narrative is more and more often considered to be its ontological state. In reality, individuals and communities construct identities, placing themselves, or being placed in diverse story lines. According to Ricoeur, narration proposes its intermediacy in order to joint the identity-characterising indications of steadiness and those of measurements, expressing them in cohesive unity, via the "discording accord" of a narrative composition [6]. Narrative turns internal and external for identity events to episodes that acquire significance as parts of

the general temporal and spatial context, and only in correlation with others episodes. Thus an interpretation of events in terms of separate identities as categories can be avoided, and the identity project can be allowed to unfold. The story of yourself and others would allow one to heck and explain the hypotheses of this project represented as a plot. It will be selective and thematic, that is — articulating a special cultural quality of an individual or community, thus appealing for assessing their identities on adequate criteria — to legitimate them as the becoming of "professionals", "new Russians", "poetry lovers", "the old-fashioned public" or "hackers".

At the same time, the repertoire of such stories is restricted by the proper public and cultural samples. We would hardly retell ourselves as a plot we have personally conceived. Narrative is impersonal in the sense that this is a common signifying practice, but turning to it, individuals adapt samples of stories to their identities and conversely, construct reality according to the stories in which they are the starring characters. Depending on the designation and size of the identity, narratives vary in dimensions. Margaret Somers and Gloria Gibson classify them as *ontological narratives*, that is — the ways in which social life runs, *public narratives,* institutionally and factually cultivated in discursive formations and first of all in the mass media, *conceptual narratives* of social science, eventually — *metanarratives* providing us with inclusion in the story by coding cultural epochs and their heroes in terms of generic values — Progress, Decadence, Industrialisation, Enlightenment, etc. [33, p. 60–63].

The namely mistrust towards metastories is, according to Lyotard, the most crucial characteristic of the post-modern. "The narrative function, — he says, — loses its functioners: a great hero, great dangers, great world cruises and great goal" [4, p. 10]. It is split into fractured verbal practices to which one turns situationally, guided by pragmatic ideas. As a matter of fact, culture, having expanded globally, yet cannot manage to retain the idea of grandeur which would without fail legitimate the hero of freedom, the hero of cognition or the hero of making. However, "the commercial ego" of television or books is making good use of the need for stories about individuals and communities. The numerous "Female Stories", "Ballads For Serious Men", "A Naturalist's Travels", "Adult Night Tales" and other TV narratives, like the memories or biographies of pop stars and politicians keep on their due service to legitimate identities by setting an example of the cohesiveness of life. The identity impossible to be told collapses and becomes inexpressive. Or it settles into its non-mirrored double — a brand nominated by fact.

The "figurativeness" of representations

The contemporary identity-legitimising practices obviously incline towards effective representation, which is the guarantee of reconciliation to its current presence in the field of culture.

The media experience produces and reproduces an unimagined number of newest representation forms [23]. Such a culture is called a "performance", cultural landscape, organised "pseudo-events", "simulacra" and "hyper-real" images (Baudrillard) which circulate in a non-linear, non-discoursive manner (Scott Lash) and stimulate sensuality, desire and carnal reactions. In addition, the growing complexity of the media allows them to operate images from extremely diverse social and historical contexts, originating a "recombinant culture" (Tod Gitlin), using the techniques of pastiche, collage, juxtaposition and kitsch (Frederic Jameson). Pushed up to the surface of the media culture, such images are primarily perceived as leading to "the aestheticisation of everyday life", when people begin to play with styles and forms of communication, getting involved in "language games" (Lyotard).

The contemporary media culture, presented in one or another way, appears to be a contradictory shift of similarities and differences, and the grounds for any identities and subjectivity — displaced and decentred. As a matter of fact, the permanent experience in comparing images from different contexts weakens their symbolic meaning, dulls the rational response replaced with carnality. As the boundaries between the individual subjectivity and "the objective reality" become thinner, in the same way there is a "rupture" or "de-differentiation", according to Scott Lash, in the boundaries between cultural formations — high and popular culture, information/news and entertainment (infotainment), advertising and editorials (advertorials), image and reality (depicted news). The voices and prospects of local cultures are also admixed, as they are placed by chance or as the result of careful selection [23].

Under the new signification mode, the space for the placement of cultural identities becomes blurred, and it begins to freely feature in marginal areas, being multiplied and modified. Identity slips away from targeted discourses, being impressed by the floating figures of representation. Such a "figurative" way to represent itself and be represented is based on the privilege of visual perceptiveness, operations with elicited from everyday life signs and images, preferring action to sense, arguing over the didactic character of cultural communications and the immediate inclusion of subjective desire in the cultural product [28, p. 172–200].

The contemporary collection of figures of cultural identity representation is rather large, but may as well be quite visible, if one tries to reduce it to just a few ideal types. Laurence Grossberg has four of them, though the "idealness" here is relative, since all of them might cross over and be combined in an extraordinary way. The Derrida-originated figure of *differance* describes a special constructive relation of negation, under which the subordinate term (the marginalised other or subaltern) is necessary and is an internal source of destabilisation, existing within the dominant identity and all the time threatening to undermine it. Such a threat to the dominant is in the nature of the language and signification. The figure of *fragmentation* emphasises the multiplicity of identity and the numerousness of positions within each, all the time being a collapsing and restored union, which is presumed by its constitution or historically based. The figure of *hybridity* is more difficult to describe and observe, since it is often combined with others, referring to the images of "the third space", "staying on the border", "between", that is — factually not having room within the visible space. Conversely, the figure of *diaspora* relates identity to historically local sites [20, p. 92–93].

All these figures are operational, and they can be easily used for describing the bulky cultural environment, first unyielding to a clear definition. For instance, the fragmentary identity of the capital of Ukraine always shows you a hybrid that you can feel while seeing how a dim underground crossing with retired old women hawking suddenly turns into a dazzling Western-type shopping mall. Or you may notice the incompatibility between the billboard "L&M Is A Lifestyle!" and the neighbouring performative "Smoking — No Time For This!". And if you are attracted by figures, see the results of mass surveys for the unconquerable cloning of the post-Chornobyl syndrome [3].

Such identity representation figures are reproduced in different cultural products at the expense of special technologies followed deliberately or unconsciously, abiding by the general rules of media culture, social imperatives or political objectives. Among the media-practised devices of text identity legitimation, a special role is played by *rhetoric and style* tools. An example is the Ukrainian political press dedicated to the election campaign of 1998, which presents the following legitimating technology drawing attention [5]:

- *the trivialisation of pathetics*, by means of which a socially-extraordinary event is built in routine structures of everyday life, getting close to the common experience and getting naturalised;

- *the formation of the media style* in political culture (from "party membership" to "consumerism");
- *the cultivation of the assessment and ironical contexts*, strengthening the recognition of "confident" or "unconfident" identities;
- *the transformation of real and imaginary objects to political or cultural brands* and handling them as an ontological representative of identity;
- *the performativeness of statements* in the formation of the image of an active political actor;
- *a deliberate or accidental play with associations* appealing for the sensual perception of presented media identities;
- the construction of *multiplicity systems of fits between media reality and the existing social realities*, which helps achieve the numerousness of contexts simultaneously determining the cultural identity.

The relative success of such media technologies is confirmed by the results of the election. However, this does not eliminate the fact that the legitimising practices the media use in favour of the identities they promote — people, events, values — quite often transform to self-reflex and their own media advertisement. The cultural self-sufficiency of the mass media is provided by their increasing ability to possess and handle the original images they have constructed. The latter are infinitely processed, enriching different representation figures and indicating the tentativeness of a political or cultural name. But simultaneously there occurs legalisation of the self-recognition of the media generously providing patterns for our identities.

References

1. *Berger P., Luckmann T.* Sotsialnoie konstruirovaniie realnosti. — M., 1995.

2. *Derrida J.* Otobiografii. Deklaratsiia nezavisimosti // AdMarginem'93. — M., 1994. — P. 174–183.

3. *Kostenko N.* The Media i neperebornist postchornobylskoi identychnosti // Postchornobylskyi sotsium: 15 rokiv po avarii. — Kyiv, 2000. — P. 302–313.

4. *Lyotard J.-F.* Sostoianiie postmoderna. — M.; SPb., 1998.

5. Media v vyborach: mezhdu politikoi i kulturoi. — K., 1999.

6. *Ricoeur P.* Germenevtika. Etika. Politika. Moskovskiie lektsii i interv'iu. — M., 1995.

7. *Foucault M.* Slova i veshchi. Arkheologiia gumanitarnykh nauk. — M., 1977.

8. *Foucault M.* Zabota o sebe. Istoriia seksualnosti-III. — M.; K., 1998.

9. *Habermas J.* Modern — nezavershonnyi proiekt // Voprosy filosofii. — 1992. — № 4. — P. 40–52.

10. *Butler J.* Bodies That Matter. — London, 1993.

11. *Bauman Z.* From Pilgrim to Tourist — or a Short History of Identity // Hall St., du Gay P. (eds.) Questions of Cultural Identity. — London, 1996. — P. 18–36.

12. *Baudrillard J.* The Perfect Crime. — London; New York, 1996.

13. *Baudrillard J.* The Consumer Society. Myths and Structures. — London, 1998.

14. *Calhoun C.* The Problem of Identity in Collective Action // Huber J. (ed.). Macro-Micro Linkage in Sociology. — Beverly Hills, 1991. — P. 51–75.

15. *Calhoun* C. Social Theory and the Politics of Identity // Calhoun C. (ed.). Social Theory and the Politics of Identity. — Cambridge, 1994. — P. 9–36.

16. Cultural Studies in Question / Ed. by Ferguson M., Golding P. — London, 1997.

17. *Derrida J.* Writing and Difference. — Chicago, 1978.

18. *Foucault M.* The Use of Pleasure. — Harmondsworth, 1987.

19. *Goffman E.* Stigma: Notes On the Management of Spoiled Identity. — New York, 1963.

20. *Grossberg L.* Identity and Cultural Studies — Is That All There Is // Hall St., du Gay P. (eds.). Questions of Cultural Identity. — London, 1996. — P. 87–107.

21. *Hall St.* Who Needs "Identity"? // Hall St., du Gay P. (eds.). Questions of Cultural Identity. — London, 1996. — P. 1–17.

22. *Haraway D.* Simians, Cyborgs and Women. — New York, 1991.

23. *Harms J., Dickens D.* Postmodern Media Studies: Analysis or Symptom? // Critical Studies in Mass Communication. — 1996. — **13**. — P. 210–227.

24. *Heath S.* Questions of Cinema. — Basingstoke, 1981.

25. *James W.* The Self and Its Selves // Social Theory. — Malden, 1993. — P. 171–187.

26. *Jameson F.* Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. — Durham, 1997.

27. *Kellner D.* Popular Culture and Constructing Postmodern Identities // Lash Sc., Friedman J. (eds). Modernity and Identity. — Oxford, 1992.

28. *Lash Sc.* Sociology of Postmodernism. — London; New York, 1996.

29. *Lemert Ch.* Postmodernism Is Not What You Think. — Oxford, 1997.

30. Modernity and Identity. — Oxford, 1992.

31. Questions of Cultural Identity. — London, 1996.

32. Social Theory and the Politics of Identity. — Cambridge, 1994.

33. *Somers M., Gibson G.* Reclaiming the Epistemological "Other": Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity // Social Theory and the Politics of Identity. — Cambridge, 1994. — P. 37–99.

34. *Taylor Ch.* The politics of Recognition // Taylor Ch. Philosophical arguments. — Cambridge, 1997. — P. 225–256.