National Identity as an Important Topic of the Research of the Man in the Future: "Opening" the Potential of the Fichtean Concept of National Identity

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In the article, the issue of national identity is discussed in the context of threats of the process of globalization in the sphere of cultural identity of young generation. They are shown also expectations that are usually formulated in the area of the future upbringing of young generations in the context previously exposed threats. In addition, it is discussed Fichte's concept of building national identity. The consequences of the analysis are three applications of the author. First of all, in his opinion, the issue of national identity should be considered as important problem in future studies on human being. Second, the Fichtean thoughts are very current, because they are part of the recommendations that are put in the area of education and bringing up young generations in the future in the face of challenges posed by globalization. Thirdly, Fichtean achievements help to set priorities in the perspective of practical future actions that should be taken in these areas in order to eliminate in the future the threats generated by the process globalization.

Keywords: globalisation, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, national identity, challenges of globalisation, local self-identification, future of humankind, risks for human civilization.

Introduction

The stunning progress that humankind has made in recent decades, and which seems to be accelerating, makes one wonder about its future. Unlike previous generations, humankind can now improve the quality of human life, but also to destroy life, almost without any limits. Such self-destruction can take place in the blink of an eye – so fast that there will be no time to stop the process once it is started. The following risks for human civilization and its surroundings are usually mentioned in this context: a nuclear war, progressive pollution of the environment, a rapid increase in the population size, problems with feeding the population, shrinking natural resources, the widening gap between the rich North and the poor South, terrorism,

diseases of affluence and a shortage of jobs. This list is sometimes expanded to include one more item: globalisation, i.e. developing the organisation of a social order with global reach, which is based on multimedia technologies, with supra-national capital flow, freedom of trade and with cultural patterns – especially mass culture – becoming similar. These processes of globalisation, understood as above, are perceived as being among the more serious threats to human development in the future [Gawor, 2006: 41-42; Slusar, 2015; Czupryński, 2016].

Granted, globalisation breeds risks for human civilization on many levels (political, economic, social, cultural, ecological, environmental). One can mention the following examples of such threats: 1. ease of travel creates issues related to unwanted population migration; 2. the increase in wealth around the world is not even, which generates dangerous tensions between rich and poor countries; 3. uniformisation of culture carries with it a risk of a loss of identity by communities, nations and people; 4. industrial development increases consumption and exploitation of natural resources. However, globalisation also has positive sides, for example, those that will allow human civilization to elevate in the future to higher levels of economic, political, social, etc. development. For example, globalisation: 1. facilitates transfer of modern technologies, which stimulate the development of individual countries; 2. has reduced the number of wars; 3. enriches cultures with elements borrowed from other cultures [Polak, 2009; Bielinowicz, 2016].

Therefore, seeing only positive or only negative sides of globalisation is both wrong and shallow. In the future globalisation is not just a threat to humanity, nor just a process that brings only benefits. Even if it causes some negatives effects to people in one area, owing to the same processes, the same people gain certain benefits in other aspects. Therefore, in the future globalisation is rather a challenge (and a multi-faceted one) which means that it has put mankind in a new, unprecedented situation, in which it (mankind) must find its place to protect itself against threats and use the opportunities that globalisation provides [Bazaluk, 2017; Gawor, 2006a: 102; Mandragelia, 2016; Svyrydenko, 2016; Svyrydenko, 2017; Ursul et al, 2017: 48-49].

It is difficult to discuss in detail the complexity of these challenges in a brief reflection. Hence, the aim of these considerations is to outline a proposal to use the reflections of the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte as a reference point for the challenges made to mankind these days by globalisation in the field of educating future generations, in particular, to develop in the future their cultural identity.

The assumed objective of these considerations determines their course. The first stage will involve revealing what seems to be major threats generated by globalisation in the sphere of the cultural identity of young generations. Further, expectations regarding the education of younger generations in the future in terms of the threats revealed earlier will be presented. This will be followed by the characterisation of the Fichtean concept of building national identity. Finally, to arrive at specific conclusions, the recommendations arising from Johann Gottlieb Fichte's thought will be juxtaposed with the postulates regarding the education of young people, which take into account the challenges of globalisation.

"Macdonaldisation" and the Patchwork-like Nature of the Cultural Identity of Young People as Significant Threats Generated by Globalisation

Critiques of globalisation usually point out that in the sphere of cultural values it produces "a global mass culture", which first "pushes out" and then "kills" local cultures. This means

that – especially owing to relatively easy access to innovative multimedia technology, which facilitate communication and reception of specific content – an increasingly unified cultural pattern, focused on consumption of the available goods, is spreading. Since George Ritzer and Benjamin Barber formulated their theses, the process of popularising a uniform cultural pattern has been known as "macdonaldisation" (or "americanisation") [Ritzer, 1997: 16-45], and its outcome, i.e. the social-cultural reality produced by it – as "McWorld" [Barber, 1997:144-150].

Globalisation favours the spreading around the world of the pattern of easy consumptionism as the population at large is offered "easily digestible" commercial products, while the so-called "high culture" is marginalised. In consequence, increasingly large groups of people not only lose their in-depth understanding of reality, but also the feeling of their own local, especially national, cultural identity. This manifests itself in abandoning local customs and traditions, which are replaced with "American solutions", usually propagated in the media. To make the idea more vivid, one can say that this means that people around the world want to consume available goods in an increasingly uniform manner and strive to live in the same way as the heroes of their favourite – mostly American – cartoons and movies do [Siuda, 2011: 185-197].

The propagation process of a unified, consumption-oriented cultural pattern is accompanied by another phenomenon, generated by the process of globalisation. This unbelievable technological progress has enabled – especially young – people to surf freely on the Internet, to switch TV and radio channels, to listen to any music of their choice, especially to choose another form of cultural identity and to put it on as if it were a ball costume. It turns out that "macdonaldisation" makes contemporary people – on the one hand – consumption-oriented regardless of where they live, but also, on the other, their cultural identity can be patchwork-like, fragmented, and in a completely disorderly manner. What is more, the consumption-oriented lifestyle, propagated in "McWorld", favours inexpediency in regard to the choices made by people. In fact, one can say that "anything can happen" in the reality of "McWorld", and everyone can first adopt in any way any cultural patterns, sometimes even inherently incoherent, that they can then "combine" to make a new "entity" and, finally, to model their own lives in accordance with it [Melosik, 2013: 10].

This means that the spread of the culture of consumptionism is accompanied by the fragmentary nature of the proposed cultural patterns. This usually leads to dispersion and to developing the cultural ambiguity of individuals, who do not know who they are, i.e. they do not know their roots or the culture of the community in which they were born. In consequence, globalisation has resulted in people living in a world in which anything is allowed; they can freely assign any meanings to their attitudes, choices, etc. Moreover, although people are mainly oriented towards the consumption of available goods, at the same time they can individualise their everyday life as they choose. Finally, although intertwining of various cultures creates specific opportunities for them to enrich each other mutually, it usually leads to developing fragmented cultural identities of individuals. What is more, modern man is often convinced that he can transform himself freely, choosing – usually from the TV or from the Internet – specific patterns, values, etc. from what is on offer. Therefore, reality presents itself to contemporary people as one great "culture supermarket"[1], in which

[1] The term "cultural supermarket" was popularised in the scientific discourse by the American anthropologist Gordon Mathews in the early 21st century. He thought that it described perfectly the new condition of culture, with its extreme market-orientation and globalisation. However, the term "cultural supermarket" is believed to have been in use in the last decade of the 20th century and its was probably used for the first time by the British theorist of culture, Stuart McPhail Hall.

everything is available instantly and from which the man can choose anything, add it to the "basket" of his cultural identity, and then, equally easily, replace any elements with other ones of his choice [Gumiński, 2010; Kluczyńska, 2010; Jaszewska, 2011: 20].

Although formulated more than decade ago, the diagnosis put forward by Zbyszko Melosik, the Polish scholar researching the influence of globalisation on young generation, has lost none of its topicality:

> *The identity of the contemporary young generation is increasingly often described with the term "the global teenager". Such a personality is affected less by national and state-related values and more by popular culture and ideology of consumption. To put it a little trivially, one can say that the "global teenager" goes to a decent high school or college (he does not like his school, but makes some effort "to avoid trouble"), knows English well, watches MTV or VIVA, listens to American or British music, surfs the virtual cyberspaces freely, knows computer codes that helps Lara Croft to survive, skateboards and rides a mountain bike, goes to McDonald's, drinks Coca-Cola, is generally cool (by the way – he knows Mona Lisa from an image on a Pepsi can and the Ode to Joy – from the passage quoted in a hit by his favourite punk-rock group) [Melosik, 2003: 26].*

Therefore, it seems that the mankind faces an important challenge in the form of the question of how – while making use of the doubtless benefits of globalisation – to protect people, especially young ones, from its unwanted effects, i.e. "macdonaldisation" and the patchwork-like nature of their cultural identity. In other words, in reference to the thought of Gordon Mathews, one can say that we cannot escape from the "cultural supermarket", as this is just the cultural condition of the present times, which affects increasing large numbers of people. Moreover, as it is rather impossible to restore the previous state of culture, i.e. its non-marketable and non-globalised form, what is left is to seek the answer to this question: How can people, especially young people, cope in the "cultural supermarket", that is, how should they be educated to do it?

What Is Expected of the Education of Young Generations In the Era of Globalisation

It is widely believed that the mankind faces great challenges regarding the education of young people in the era of globalisation. It is expected that proper educational influence on children and adolescents will result in developing in them a regional, national, European (or African, Asian, etc.) and global identity. There is also hope that children and adolescents will be shaped in the spirit of cultural pluralism and taught to adopt attitudes of tolerance and openness towards other nations, religions, etc. Entities responsible for education (such as families, kindergartens, schools, universities) are supposed to prevent the cultural unity of a community, which is regarded as a desired foundation of the life and functioning of a community, from disintegrating. This seems extremely difficult to fulfil given that globalisation favours developing patchwork-like cultural identities in young people. On the other hand, it is expected that proper education, oriented towards building a global inter-cultural society, will be able to protect successive generations against the effects of "macdonaldisation", i.e. the tendency among young people to live consumptionism-oriented lives.

Considering these expectations regarding education of young generations, the following recommendations are mentioned which should be implemented to effectively meet the

challenges of globalisation, i.e. for preparing children and adolescents to find their place in the "cultural supermarket" [Szczurek-Boruta, 2013: 44-46]:

1. To foster the development of cultural identity of an individual by assigning a proper rank to local, national and religious values.
2. To develop communication and dialogue skills, i.e. to stimulate the process of abandoning a one-dimensional identity, i.e. usually a national or religious identity, and adopting a multinational or multi-religious identity.
3. To develop attitudes of openness towards "otherness" and "strangeness."
4. To adopt a multi-dimensional (multicultural) educational strategy.
5. To use a natural (national, religious) cultural pattern.
6. To develop an ability to use other cultural codes and experiences in life.

It is peculiar that such words and phrases as "simultaneously", "at the same time" are used when identifying these and similar actions, which clearly shows that it is postulated that these actions should be taken – with equal intensity – "at the same time" or at the same stage of a young person's development. However, sometimes those actions are given the highest priority whose aim is to foster openness to cultural "otherness" or "strangeness" in young people, while at the same time underestimating the significance of local, national or religious values. For example, in the European Commission's White Book issued in 2002, concerning youth-related policy of the European Union Member States, "openness to others" is mentioned as the first, i.e. cultural openness to "strangeness" is regarded as the prime educational objective, and efforts to propagate local, national, and especially religious values are significantly demoted [Męcina-Bednarek, 2013: 77-80].

However, when implementing these and similar recommendations, one cannot forget that everyone is – as the Danish social anthropologist, Kirsten Hastrup put it – "a native to a certain world". This means that – despite progressing globalisation – people constantly need a cultural space known to them, in which they will feel "at home" [Hastrup, 2008: 160]. In other words – which was perfectly grasped by the Polish sociologist Jan Szczepański in his work entitled *"I put down roots in this land"*, the key to the proper experience of humanity is that a person should be "from somewhere" and should have a cultural space "somewhere" where they would be constantly at home [Dziadzia, 2016: 75-83]. The point is that only if a person puts down roots in a specific local culture can they find their place in larger socio-cultural structures in the increasingly globalised world [Kranz-Szczurek, 2012: 31-32].

However, local cultural "rooting" can be of various nature. It can be discussed in the regional, national, religious, etc. dimension. Which of these dimensions should be regarded as being of key importance? To answer this question, one should see what Johann Gottlieb Fichte wrote about it.

The Fichtean Concept of National Identity and the Postulates that Stem From It

The Fichtean heritage is vast, and the subjects dealt with by this philosopher were numerous – from the epistemological issues through ontological and metaphysical as well as moral-ethical ones, to political, economic and religious issues. In order to trace the Fichtean proposition "to educate the Germans to Germanness", i.e. to its ideal foundations, development and historical and social conditions, one should focus on each stage of life of the thinker and the contents of his work written during them. However, one can say that its foundations are included in three pieces of work, especially in the last work, in which the philosopher tries to awaken the patriotic feelings in his compatriots during the humiliating

period of the Napoleonic occupation: *"The human vocation" (1800), "A closed trade state" (1800) and "Speeches to the German nation" (1808)*. Reading these pieces of work leads one to the conclusion that, according to Johann Gottlieb Fichte: 1. the German nation is the first nation on Earth; 2. the German language is the one true language; 3. the German spirit is the spirit of the true philosophy; 4. that Germanness is the feeling of the true poetry; 5. the true science is practiced by the Germans; 6. the Germans are people of the true human character; 7. the Germans are the true Christians; 8. the spirit of humanity lives in the German language; 9. the German culture is the true culture [Tochowicz, 1937: 257-263].

It is true, firstly, that these theses formulated by Johann Gottlieb Fichte can be regarded as a manifestation of rhetorical exaggeration, which was typical of the Germans after the defeat at the battle of Jena (1806), when the Germans made great efforts to free themselves from occupation and to unite the whole nation to achieve this goal [Kuderowicz, 1963: 28-29]. Secondly, one can look for a significant impulse in the Fichtean concept – although this is debatable – which bore fruit decades later with the tragedy that the German nation gave to the world in World War II [Kieliszek, 2010: 171-176]. But, thirdly, the concept of Germans building their own nation, as presented by Johann Gottlieb Fichte, contains a covert later construct, a thought which is worth taking up because of the earlier challenges of the process of globalisation, because the German philosopher seems to have something important to say in this matter.

It is fundamental in the concept of Johann Gottlieb Fichte that no one can develop properly when totally separated from other people. This is conveyed by the famous Fichtean phrase: "There is no You without I, there is no I without You" [Fichte, 1996: 202]. This means that the man can develop his humanity only by entering into a relation with another man. What relations did the German philosopher have in mind and which of them are the most important? People can relate to each other on various levels, in various ways, etc.

This can be perfectly interpreted with the use of the concept developed by Talcott Parson, the 20th century American sociologist. Talcott Parsons is known to identify four basic types of human relations: 1. economic; 2. political; 3. communication and culture-related; 4. based on one's outlook on the world. Further, according to the American author, each of these identified bond types is structured owing to the existence of a specific medium, which binds people with each other. Therefore, in the case of economic bonds, money is the medium that binds people. In political bonds, it is positive law. In communication and culture-related bonds, it is language (speech) and in the bonds based on one's outlook on the world, it is customs, habits, religious laws, etc. [Heinrichs, 1990: 56-63].

When regarding the proposition of Talcott Parsons as the background for Fichtean thought, one must note that the German thinker regarded language (speech) as the most important medium binding people. He regarded the others as secondary because they are always founded on the language. This means that – according to Johann Gottlieb Fichte – the most fundamental bonds are created between people when they use one language. Meanwhile – in Johann Gottlieb Fichte's opinion – a nation should be regarded as a sufficiently large population that has developed as a result of mutual relations of people using one language. Based on these findings, the German philosopher observed that a nation, being a community using a specific and distinct language is a key community in the process of humanising a human subject. In other words, people can acquire the self-consciousness only within linguistically defined bonds with other people and then develop their own humanity. Only in the next steps, when he started to seek "the best language and the best nation", i.e. a language and a nation that would best favour the development of humanity in man, did Johann Gottlieb

Fichte use his observations and develop (let it be noted that he made a number of observational and interpretational errors on the way) his own vision of the primacy of the Germans and their language as the true language [Kieliszek, 2009/2010: 256-259].

According to Johann Gottlieb Fichte, a language, as such, has two properties. One is reflecting reality and the other is influencing people. That language reflects reality means that there is a natural link between the language and the world, which manifests itself in the language mimicking – through words, sounds or gestures – the objects that they denote (these would be words whose sounds are similar to the sounds they denote, such as "szeleścić" ["rustle"] in Polish and "rascheln" in German, or the German Kuckuck – cuckoo). Another property of a language, which is more important according to the philosopher, is that it is way of influencing some people by others and it is a "carrier" of the culture of a community, i.e. meanings, life patterns, outlook on the world, which are adopted in it. This means that language is used not only to give commands by some people to others, but – and this is much more important – a person, when communicating with other people, first becomes conscious of oneself as someone completely distinct and then, by entering interactions with other people by means of the language, develops and assimilates the culture of their own nation [Kieliszek, 2010: 147-152].

Therefore, one can say that the language used by members of a nation is the "heart" of the culture and, in consequence, the identity of the nation. It is because a language is a medium which is used to mould members of a nation in interpersonal relations and it is a scaffolding on which all the products of a nation's culture are based and through which they are transmitted to future generations. In consequence, one can note that – according to Fichte – the aim of the existence of various nations is to support their members in developing their humanity by, first, teaching them their native language and then by culturising them in the language [Kieliszek, 2014: 311-315]. In other words, one can observe that Johann Gottlieb Fichte suggested that young people should first be socialised into the national (cultural) identity and only then should they be "opened" gradually to the cultural codes of other nations.

Conclusions

These thoughts of Fichte should be perceived as highly topical, because they are not only consistent with the recommendations regarding educations of younger generations, but they also help to prioritise the practical actions, which should be taken in these areas in the future.

It is indisputable that the education of young generations for openness and tolerance towards "otherness" is important and in the future efforts must be made to eliminate such attitudes as aversion, hostility, fear of strangers, expressing aversion to foreigners, etc.

However, it does not seem to be right – which Johann Gottlieb Fichte expressly suggested – to equate in the future an ability to use foreign cultural codes or to build a multi-dimensional cultural identity and to build a cultural identity in the local, especially national, dimension. The German philosopher was right in thinking that only a person with a relatively strong, stable national and cultural identity can – without fearing for their own development – meet "foreign" cultural codes. Moreover, only a person with a strong national identity, aware of and responsible for the cultural heritage of his own nation – as Johann Gottlieb Fichte appears to suggest – can effectively resist "macdonaldisation" and should not be prone to develop in themselves a patchwork-like cultural identity.

Therefore, it is worth reviving the Fichtean solutions and attempting to translate them to the educational future practice of young generations, because the importance of a national culture as a natural "space" of a person, in which they can develop their humanity, is greatly

valued in the heritage of Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The thought of the German philosopher can be highly inspiring in seeking an effective antidote to "macdonaldisation" and the perceptible tendency to develop a patchwork-like cultural identity.

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