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The New Generation at the Crossroad of Cultures: Socialization Aspect

Nowa generacja na skrzyżowaniu kultur: aspekt socjalizacji

Streszczenie

Globalizacja jest procesem postępującym, widocznym w ekonomii, edukacji, kulturze i innych obszarach. Otwiera nowe możliwości na rynku pracy, w ekonomii, edukacji i relacjach międzykulturowych. Niemniej jednak w tym samym czasie indywidualne aspekty socjalizacji stają się coraz bardziej skomplikowanym procesem. Wymagają oceny oddziaływań środowiskowych, kulturowych i dopasowania do nich. W centrum zainteresowania artykułu jest problem nowych pokoleń jako przekroju kultury i aspektów socjalizacji.

Pytania badawcze:

- » Jak zdefiniować nową generację (pokolenie) poprzez kontakty z kulturą i ich indywidualną socjalizację?
- » Jaki jest schemat (przebieg) rozwoju procesów socjalizacji nowych pokoleń w kontakcie z kulturą?

Metodologiczną podstawą badań jest konstruktywizm społeczny. Wnioski obrazują procesy rozwoju i przebiegu socjalizacji nowych pokoleń w aspekcie kulturowym. Wyróżniono trzy modele dla tych procesów: *Pre-arrival* – przed spotkaniem, *Encounter* – spotkanie, *Metamorphosis* – metamorfozy. Każdy z tych stanów ewoluuje na poziomach mikro, makro i mezo, a ich elementy oddziałują na socjalizację indywidualną. Wnioski mogą pomagać nowym pokoleniom unikać trudności w zglobalizowanym świecie, identyfikując główne elementy socjalizacji, jak: wartości, standardy i role.

Słowa kluczowe: nowe pokolenie, kultura, socjalizacja, poziomy mikro, makro i mezo

Abstract

The globalization process – rapid in economic, educational, cultural and other spaces – opens a few possibilities in labour market, economics, education and intercultural interchange.

However, at the same time individual's socialization becomes more complicated because it is necessary to estimate the environment changing under the influence of different cultures and adjust to it. The subject of the article is the new generation at the intersection of cultures in the aspect of socialization. The aim is to highlight the peculiarity of the new generation's socialization at the intersection of cultures and indicate the possibility for its development.

Objectives:

- » defining the new generation by identifying essential contact points of culture and individual's socialization;
- » creating the model of development of the new generation's socialization at the intersection of cultures.

The article highlights the new generation and essential contact points of its socialization. The model of development of the new generation's socialization at the intersection of cultures is presented. It is possible to use the three stage-scheme for the new generation's socialization: pre-arrival stage, encounter stage, and metamorphosis stage. In each stage, it is necessary to evaluate micro, meso, macro levels and their elements that influence individual's socialization. This might help the new generation to avoid confusion in the globalising world and identify essential contact points of its socialization: values, standards, and rules. This determination may help create basis for decision-making and overcoming difficulties of socialization.

Keywords: new generation, culture, socialization, micro level, meso level, macro level.

Introduction

The globalization process – rapid in economic, educational, cultural and other spaces – opens a few possibilities in labour market, economics, education and intercultural interchange. However, at the same time individual's socialization becomes more complicated because it is necessary to estimate the environment changing under the influence of different cultures and adjust to it. This is problematic enough because every culture possesses its visible side (external culture) as well as the hidden one (internal culture), an individual also possesses his/her values, standards, certain expression of his/her behaviour and so on. Referring to culture as an iceberg, we can state that almost two thirds of the culture are under water. Thus, we can only envision what it is truly like. But, in any case, there are values in the deep level (Schemerhorn, Hunt, Osborn, 1994). In the human being's socialization process, his/her thinking and behaviour should be related to certain standards, rules (more in: Targamadze, 2010) and be shaped on the basis of certain values. We can *a priori* state that contact points of culture and his/her individual values will influence individual's socialization process.

In this context, it is necessary to point out that both the values laying in the depths of culture and human individual values are not so easily identified – they might be only declared, imaginable, conceivable values, etc. In addition, in the real life we face certain subcultures, contra-cultures, individual's expression of certain values, different understanding of the culture, its identification (with the nation, country, different generations, etc.) and alike. This particularly happens in the globalising world, in which technologies take more important place, the impact of virtual environment increases, greater differences among generations emerge (independent from the country

of residence). Particularly, the new generation is different enough from the previous generations (it is called Generation Z or the Zero Generation because new contact points originate here). In the globalising world, Generation Z faces different cultures. Thus the following question arises: Are there any common contact points in the intersection of the new generation's socialization and cultures?

This generation has been investigated in different aspects: various features (Lumpjjeva, Volkov, 2013; Palfri, Gasser, 2011; Prensky, 2012; Soldatova, Zotova, Lebeševa, Šliapnikov, 2013, etc.), the peculiarity of reading (Falschlehner, 2014), values (Sandomirsky, 2011) and others; however, it was hard to find any research showing aspects of improvement of this generation's socialization.

The subject of the article is the new generation at the intersection of cultures in the aspect of socialization. The aim is to highlight the peculiarity of the new generation's socialization at the intersection of cultures and indicate the possibility for its development. Objectives:

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Methodological attitude: social constructivism. As B. Kim (2001) states, *socium* members create reality and this depends on their thinking, which influences their actions. Their knowledge is the fruit of their thinking influenced by culture. Individuals create it by their actions, jointly with others, in the environment they inhabit.

Theoretical and practical relevance: in the intersection of the new generation's socialization and cultures; the construction of the model is new in the theoretical approach, it can be modified for a specific individual in order to improve his/her socialization.

The new generation and essential contact points of its socialization

The new generation is defined with the use of following terms: digital, children of virtual environment, natives of digital generation, Generation Z and so on. Identification of its emergence is problematic. For example, A. Ferincz, L. Hortovanyi, R. Szabó, D. Taródy (2011) think that the date of birth of Generation Z is 1991; A. Cross-Bystrom (2010) indicates 1994, Western sociologists (McCrindle, Wolfinger, 2010) point to 1995 and connect it to the information technologies. Considering that in Lithuania information technologies have developed fast enough and have attained high level of development, it is possible to identify 1995 as the first year of the Generation's Z, although no researcher in Lithuania expressed an opinion on this subject.

However, all authors agree that it closely related to technologies and that it spends most of the time in virtual environment (Палффи, Гассеп, 2011). So, virtual environment has great influence on this generation. But what is characteristic to it? In order to closely characterize it, I will refer to scientists, researches, empirical research conducted by me in Lithuania in 2014/2015 as well as the research conducted in Georgia

in 2014 based on the same methodology (in Georgia, N. Sharashenidze carried out the research and interpreted the results).

Having analysed works of different authors (Falschlehner, 2014; Lumpjieva, Volkov, 2013; Palfri, Gasser, 2011; Prensky, 2012; Sandomirsky, 2011; Soldatova, Zotova, Lebeševa, Šliapnikov, 2013, etc.), I identified the following essential features of the new generation in the scientific study entitled “The New (Z) Generation – Lost or Undiscovered yet? Identification of Essential Aspects of New (Z) Generations Child’s Learning Processes” (Targamadžė, Girdzijauskienė, Šimelionienė, Pečiuliauskienė, Nauckūnaitė, 2015):

- » “loop” thinking – information is received in small chunks (the amount of information placed on computer screen);
- » finding and processing of information is different than in other generations, superficial reception of information, not founded by deep analysis;
- » fast finding of information, inability to structure it and present it orally;
- » hyperactivity;
- » non-linear teaching/learning process. In the field of information, teaching/learning is eclectic, independent; however, it motivates a learner to apply different than traditional paradigm of teaching;
- » tendency to social autism;
- » vast interest in social networks and communicating through those networks in virtual space;
- » consumerism;
- » infantilization;
- » high level of anxiety;
- » sensitiveness;
- » inability to control stress;
- » raised level of self-satisfaction;
- » expressed individualism, orientation on oneself, lack of attention to other people, own interests valued above those of others and protected, striving to be independent and autonomous;
- » insufficient efforts to satisfy requirements of the society and established standards of behaviour;
- » carelessness, impulsiveness, tendency to behave hastily, lack of concern for the future;
- » ineptitude and unwillingness to reflect upon own actions, frequent impulsive acting, inability to independently formulate the programme of own behaviour, lack of criticism of own actions;
- » inability to organize own time, frequent changing of aims, lack of real planning of activities;
- » all self-regulation mechanisms reduced (prognostication, control, modelling, evaluation of results) – to teach and learn self-regulation by modelling particular circumstances of real life;
- » different concept of career conception than in previous generations – career is as sort of “shopping”, searching for something new and interesting, balance of leisure and profession is important and choice of profession/career is only a secondary objective;

- » variety of activities performed at the same time – a child of Generation Z wants everything and now – he/she at the same time can watch TV, do his/her homework, put pictures on Facebook and eat;
- » different reading – a book does not remain the main source of knowledge, reading changes its character – loop reading, not the linear one, dominates (the latter gets weaker);
- » the change of identity – both personal and social identity is modelled particularly in virtual environment;
- » lack of confidentiality;
- » lack of critical thinking;
- » active and long-time participation in virtual life;
- » insufficient concern for security of own dossier;
- » innovativeness;
- » values are formed mostly by the Internet.

Other features are also characteristic for children of the new generation. After all, they can be both creators and victims of aggressive bullying, casualties and executioners alike. The attention should be paid to the fact that the definition of this generation is closely related to virtual environment, for example: to loop thinking, variety of activities, change of identity, dossier, social autism and so on.

The respondents (students of Generation Y who plan to become pedagogues) interviewed in Lithuania and Georgia in 2014–2015 highlight the involvement of Generation Z in the virtual environment. They point out, among other features, hyperactivity of Generation Z, its involvement in the virtual world, impaired concentration, different modes of communication with friends and teachers, inability to plan own activities, involvement in social networks. Their answers show that the respondents perceive strong connection of Generation Z to the virtual world. In fact, some respondents pointed out that they master technologies rather rapidly and it seems natural to them. No respondent tackled the issue of values directly. However, the subject of values should be important to all the educators, because one of the most important objectives of education is to help the pupils develop the value basis and create own navigation systems, which would help them properly behave in real life. Educators should create awareness that virtual space is not a separate world, it is, however, an important information space that allows for fast obtaining of necessary information and knowledge, which can be applied in real life. Thus, they need the help to form the value basis which would become the datum-point for thinking, decision-making and behaviour. However, such formation of the basis is not a simple process, particularly for the new generation which is greatly influenced by the virtual environment. And the value formation does not take place in a vacuum. Thus, a person is influenced by the social networks in which he/she communicates and by the chosen referent groups. It is often noted that representatives of the new generation while communicating experience confrontation of virtual and real environments – representatives of Generation Z, used to communicating in virtual environment, are often confused by communication in real environment which can result in destructive conflicts.

Peculiarities of this generation can be most clearly seen in comparison with other generations (see Table 1).

Table 1. The concept of four generations (Scholz, 2013, p. 1)

	Generation of Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Date of birth	Since 1950	Since 1965	Since 1980	Since 1995
Attitude/ philosophy direction	Idealism	Scepticism	Optimism	Realism
Main feature	Self-realisation	Lack of perspectives	Motivation	“Nonchalance”
Involvement/ participation	Local community	Local community	International society	Global society
Role	Collectivism	Individualism	Collectivism	Individualism
Level of activeness	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High
Amount of knowledge/ information	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High and strong
Qualification	Learning for business	Little learning	Paid studies	Learning only for oneself
Guides	Only profession	Personal needs / privacy (despite profession)	Profession is related to personal needs / privacy	Personal needs / privacy (dissociated from profession)

Table 1 presents four generations (of Baby Boomers, X, Y, and Z) in the light of eight defining features: attitude (philosophic direction), main feature, involvement/ participation, role, level of activeness, amount of knowledge/information, qualification and guides. Generation Z is oriented towards pragmatism, is defined as “flighty”, participates in the global society, performs roles related to individualism, has high level of activeness as well as high and strong amount of knowledge/information, learns only for oneself, is guided mainly by personal needs and privacy (separated from the profession). In fact, this is different from features of Generation Y or X. the attention should be paid to the philosophical direction: realism is characteristic for Generation Z, whereas Generation Y is defined by its optimism, Generation X – by scepticism, Generation of Baby Boomer – by idealism. Respectively, peculiarities of each generation become obvious. It is evident that certain features, enumerated above, are characteristic for Generation Z. They should not be understood as thorough characteristics of Generation Z, in all probability this is only an outline. However, it is important to enumerate those features in order to find contact points with individual’s socialization.

As individual’s socialization does not take place in the vacuum but in certain cultural environment, it is necessary to find the contact points of culture and person’s socialization.

As A. Juodaitytė and D. Martišauskienė (2007, p. 19) note, “culture is the main area of person’s socialization involving the knowledge, values, standards and examples accumulated by the humankind that represent the inward world of separate individuals, social groups, communities and the entire society”. Generally, standards and rules are coded in values carried by culture.

The analysis of levels of organizational culture (Schemerhorn, Hunt, Osborn, 1994, p. 427) shows that it can be explored on three levels:

- » noticeable cultures (it is clear, tangible, manifesting in ceremonies, rituals, traditions, symbols);
- » overlapping values (level of attitudes, behaviour rules);
- » common transactions (visible in organization’s philosophy, educational values, etc. – supporting values which are considered important by an organization).

If we get deeper to person’s socialization, we will see that it also contains standards and rules (which an individual recognizes as fundamental or not) formed on the basis of values. To be more precise, an individual accepts them and follows or rejects them in his/her activity, and finally adapts to the environment but these standards and values do not become his/her own. M. Steers (1994) illustrates this process evidently enough by grouping socialization into three stages: pre-arrival stage, encounter stage, metamorphosis stage. The first stage is receiving information about certain institution – this can be an organization, country’s culture and alike. In the second stage, the confrontation takes place – a person identifies the possessed information about the institution or culture and it becomes for him/her acceptable or not. If it is acceptable, he/she intercepts certain standards and rules; if it is not, he/she rejects it or adapts to the environment – to be more precise, he/she adjusts. In other words, this is more of a mimicry of individual’s behaviour in certain environment.

Thus, values of any culture and individual’s socialization as well as the standards and rules formed on their basis are essential contact points.

The model of development of the new generation’s socialization at the intersection of cultures

The new generation is distinguished by certain features, which are influenced by information technologies. Special attention should be paid to involvement of the new generation into virtual environment and communication in social networks. In large part, social networks influence formation of their values. The attention should be paid to the remarks made by G. Soldatova, J. Zotova, M. Lebeševa, and V. Šliapnikov (2013, p. 8) that globalization process, development of information technologies, mobile connection, the Internet and other virtual environments influence identification and formation of this generation’s values. In this context, special attention should be paid to the remark of O. Schneck (2010, p. 3) that education without values is worthless and that values do not emerge out of themselves. In general, values of this generation are differently emphasized. According to M. Sandomirsky (2011), it is possible to distinguish four main groups of values of the new generation: health (security and physical

health), family, social values (career, material status) and inward values (education, culture). Health is the most relevant value for them. It is expected that this value will become even stronger because the contemporary speed of life requires additional efforts. Unfortunately, family as a value, according to M. Sandomirsky (2011), will experience gradual devaluation. They will pay greater attention to career and material well-being (social values). As a result of their hyperactivity, emotional problems and conflicting natures, their inter-competition can intensify and the new generation, wishing to attain their goals, will display more aggressive behaviour towards people around them. For Generation Z inward values will gradually become irrelevant – the number of those who will care for education, personal self-development and alike will decrease.

Values as a contact point of culture and an individual contribute to individual's acceptance (or lack of it) of standards and rules of certain culture. Thus, the very first step should be identification of culture and individual's values. It is necessary to search for contact points and their realization. If sometimes values are conflicting, it is necessary to search for contact points and their awareness. Otherwise, individual's socialization process will be unsuccessful.

Thus, in the first, pre-arrival stage (Steers, 1994) it is possible only to presume about values of certain organization, group, social layer, which lie within the country's culture and to get certain information about them. Undoubtedly, at this time it is hard to clearly identify the value level. It is possible to get more information about overlapping values (standards, rules) and external culture (traditions, symbols, language, myths, ceremonies and so on). In the second stage, encounter stage, an individual already faces culture and all three levels become clear. Undoubtedly, it is hard to identify the first level – common agreements, but it is already possible to feel through standards and rules that usually form the basis of common agreements. External culture also has to fit them. An individual identifies standards and rules and, if they are acceptable, he/she accepts them and models its behaviour according to them in the third, metamorphosis stage. If standards and rules do not fit him/her, the behaviour of the individual does not change, only some certain aspects of it may be adapted.

In every stage, it is necessary to evaluate different factors influencing individual's socialization. So it is possible to invoke factors of micro, meso, macro socialization levels.

Figure 1 presents the levels influencing socialization and their elements which impact our learning how to be human and humane in the society:

- » Me (and my significant others) is the centre of this scheme. It is the micro level. It also contains family, networks of friends, and local clubs as socializing agents. It is related to local organizations and community.
- » The second level is meso. It involves political parties and religious denominations that transmit values. This level might be related to national organizations, institutions and ethnic subcultures.
- » The third level is macro – socialization for national loyalty and patriotism. It is related to society. Another component belonging to the macro level would be socialization for tolerance and respect across borders. The second component of the macro level is related to global community.

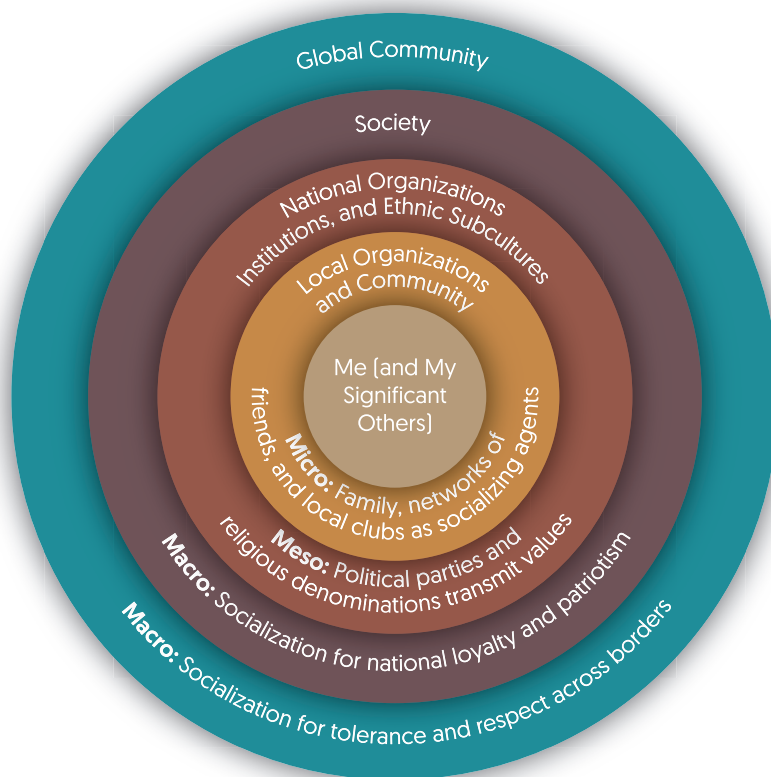


Fig. 1. The micro, meso and macro levels (based on: Ballantine, Roberts, Korgen, 2015, p. 93)

Three levels influencing individual's socialization, which should be related to culture, are important as "Whether at the micro, meso, or macro level, our close family and friends plus various organizations help us learn how to be human and humane in our society. Skills are taught, as are values such as loyalty and care-giving" (Ballantine, Roberts, Korgen, 2015, p. 92). Obviously, all three levels and their elements influence individual's socialization, and they can affect each individual distinctively. At all levels an individual faces specific cultures, for example, at the micro level it can be family and friends networking, at the meso level – political parties, religions and so on, at the macro level – different societies or groups. And, considering that the new generation is strongly connected to the virtual environment, it is expected that social networks can have great influence on an individual as they present varying information, which is not always analysed and evaluated by a particular person. Thus, it is necessary to evaluate the levels and their elements influencing an individual in each socialization stage. This will manifest for everyone in a distinctive way. Thus, it is necessary to consider cultures and individual's socialization according to their contact points – values, standards and rules. Their cohesion can improve socialization of the representatives of the new generation. And in order to improve their socialization, it is possible to follow the above-mentioned three stages enumerated by M. Steers (1994).

Discussion

Globalising and dynamic world provokes pondering the changes in culture, individual's socialization in changing political, cultural, economic, educational and other contexts. This process is encumbered by immersion of the new (Z) generation into the virtual world, in which it is hard to enumerate specific factors influencing individuals. A human being can belong to different social networks, it is evident that reference groups will not be homogeneous as well. Considering that educational factors can be casual, it is hard to identify their influence upon a human being *a priori*. With general characteristic of the Generation Z in mind, three stage-scheme for the socialization created by M. Steers (1994): pre-arrival stage, encounter stage, and metamorphosis stage at possible micro, meso, macro socialization levels might be used to improve socialization of representatives of the new generation at an organization or a society as a whole. However, it is necessary to evaluate how each person is influenced by these factors, as well as other factors not mentioned earlier: personal emotions, perceiving and understanding culture and values, moral values, influence of virtual environment, psychological climate and so on. These aspects were not evaluated and references to them were not presented in the article. Thus, in searching for possible factors influencing a person, possible factors and their influence should be more thoroughly studied in each stage of socialization. This should help in proactive management and allow for directing an individual towards positive socialization. The schemes presented in the article should not be modified to fit particular situation. They have to be evaluated in specific contexts and modelled to them.

Conclusions

The new generation is characterized by certain features, the formation of which is influenced by the virtual world. For most of them, the world splits into two separate ones: virtual and real. The latter is understood by the new generation very individually, often confused with the virtual world. Thus, their thinking and actions sometimes are inadequate, resulting from improper understanding of values, standards and rules of other generations in the real world.

The new generation faces socialization problems because very different cultures (of countries, nations, organizations, individuals' virtual and real environment, etc.) – which have their own values, standards, and rules – intersect. Such intersection also requires individual's decision which standards and rules to accept, which values to agree with, which to contradict or to reject. Thus, it is necessary to help them to decide, avoiding coercion, by encouraging making conscious decision in choosing certain standards and rules. Values, on the basis of which standards and rules are formed, will be the essential axis of individual's socialization at the intersection of different cultures.

The globalising world gives an individual the possibility to choose certain space in which he/she wants to live and choose his/her referent group. It is possible to use the three stage scheme for the new generation's socialization: pre-arrival stage, encounter stage, and metamorphosis stage. In each stage it is necessary to evaluate micro, meso,

macro levels and their elements influencing individual's socialization. This might help the new generation to avoid confusion in the globalising world and identify essential contact points of its socialization: values, standards, and rules.

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