

Identity in modern society

In a general sense, identity can be defined as, on the one hand, the individual's perception of himself as a bearer of certain qualities, traits, properties, skills, etc. that distinguish her from other people, make her unique, and give a sense of longevity and heredity, immutability in time and space. On the other hand, identity presupposes self-identification of an individual with certain social, professional, national, territorial, spatial, class, religious and other communities, emotional and normative-value attitude to her group affiliation. In the first case, it is customary to speak of personal identity, and in the second - about the collective or group identity. Both the first and the second types of identity are social in nature, origin and models of presentation.

Identity is one of the most pressing phenomena that attracts attention of not only scholars but also politicians, journalists and the general public over the past few decades. The interest in this issue is not accidental and is explained by those global transformations that are unprecedented in their scale and depth, involve in the orbit of their influence to some extent all societies. Identity takes on the character of a problem when what has recently seemed coherent and stable acquires the features of doubt, fluidity and uncertainty. The famous English sociologist E. Giddens characterizes modern identity as experiencing a "crisis", and another prominent thinker Z. Bauman defines the latest situation with identity as its "discovery" in a globalized world. Such characteristics are not accidental and reflect the peculiarities of real identification processes in modern times. This topic is extremely relevant for modern Ukraine, where in recent years the processes of formation of the modern Ukrainian nation, strengthening of national identity and, at the same time, the spread of pro-European orientations and European identity have intensified. These changes in identification models and practices are taking place against the background of profound transformations in various spheres of life and military conflict in the east of the country.

We live in an era of radical social change that is taking place at the local, regional, national and global levels and is leading to a deep crisis in the construction and maintenance of social identities. Familiar, ingrained and socially sanctioned patterns and models of self-identification are undergoing significant changes, questioned, undermined, while new ones are still being formed. There are changes in the whole system of categorization of the surrounding world. That is why the study of self-identification processes is of exceptional theoretical-cognitive and scientific-practical interest.

Social identity can be seen as a principle of cognition and orientation in the social environment and as a core element in the system of social categorization of the world. Common identity determines the similarity of objective interests, social practices, value orientations, structural contexts and content of social interaction, the presence of congruent pictures of the world and the similarity of "I-concepts". It is likely that the bearers of a certain identity share the same cognitive models, i.e. the principles of categorization of the world around us, its division into "we" and "they", components of worldview, understanding of material and political conditions and interests. Ultimately, this leads to the creation of symbolic and mental boundaries, social distance and conflicts between groups and categories.