

## Introduction

Today the issue of the condition of young people in the age of late modernity has become a very complex and ambiguous one. Social changes in civilizational and cultural dimension have meant that many of the classic paradigms and concepts of the social sciences have lost their relevance. To find the new rules necessary to conceptualize and study youth, the issues concerned with the shaping of the identity of young people in the period of liquid modernity should be utilized as they represent a peculiar crystallization of personality in terms of axiological relativism. In an increasingly unstable situation, it becomes extremely important to clarify the role of educational entities present in the process, defining the role of institutions such as the family, school, church or the media. It is also important to indicate the opportunities and risks to identity posed by the contemporary culture, or to create opportunities to look at the crises of identity. Therefore, any discussion conducted in a wide circle of specialists can contribute to the understanding of the problems of today's youth and the knowledge of their condition.

First of all, it is necessary to make a critical analysis and interpretation of the latest ways of recognizing youth as a subject of study by philosophy, pedagogy, psychology and sociology. Youths born at the turn of the century are in fact a new generation quite distinct from previous ones. Its unique nature and diversity has origins in the socio-cultural, political and economic of our country, Europe and the world, which is also an important point of reference. The phenomenon of globalization is not only a culturally neutral description of the geopolitical realities of the 21st century, is not only a normative vision of some form of life. This



term has become a major category of organizing our thinking in a variety of academic disciplines, which describes the many contemporary social, cultural and geopolitical phenomena at play. It is now so common as to be annoying with the result that fundamentally globalization risks soon ceasing to mean anything. The answer to the question of whether globalization is a cross-linked world without borders, standardizes lives of individuals and groups, in fact is very complex. Based on a critical review of contemporary social theory, globalization appears as a process of transformation, not only the institutions and organizations, but also the very fabric of identity and personal life of individuals.

Under the conditions of accelerated changes associated with globalization and transformational processes, it has been (and continues) to also shake the foundations of the traditional order of values—those values which are related to the unique nature of human, social and economic situations are beginning to become increasingly accepted. The observation of social life indicates the relationship between a contemporary cultural crisis and one of orientation, of the evaluation capacities of the young generation whose world of values is largely embedded in a new culture and is not without influence on their way of life. Today's youth is no longer connected (as it was in the case in post-war or post-communist years) with a common belief, axiology or communication code. It is a generation with a growing diversity of attitudes and value judgments, specifically lost, reflective, focused around its own existence.

At the level of both cultural and civilization, fundamental changes to social life have occurred in recent decades. The main beneficiaries and subjects of the potential risks of these changes are young people. Unique technological progress have meant that things and artefacts have acquired a subjective nature. New media is today "a parallel world", in which young people dwell. The media are no longer a mediator in the relationship, or a source of knowledge. Currently people are not *using* the Internet or social medias, they are just "*in*" it, so it is important to answer the following questions: How does the media influence the psyche of young people? How do the young redefine social categories, such as friendship, love, community, etc.? What are the ways of experiencing everyday life via social networking? How does this change the attitude of the

younger generation toward values? What are the results in these fields of research on young people?

Another disturbing phenomenon seems to be a change of culture (ideas, values and social norms). Today's youth live in a transgressive culture, in which the old concepts of transcendence lose importance. The postmodern epoch appears to be directed against all traditional and religious values, which could weaken the contemporary fascination with the idea of individual self-fulfilment. There is therefore a need for a critical reflection of both contemporary cultural trends of the mainstream and developing new varieties of subcultures.

We live in a postmodern era which was foretold by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. It is no coincidence that the philosopher announced the "death of God", thus expressing the cultural condition in which Christian ideas lost their former strength to shape humanity. Nowadays, we observe that media culture, politics, law, legislation consistently want to detach people from the Christian image of the human. How does this social condition influence young people? What possibilities remain to the Church to convince young people of the importance of the ideas and ideals of the Christian? The above problems and formulated questions have been addressed and developed in the fourth volume of the *Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana*.

In the first part, the Authors of individual studies undertake their deliberations on the following issues: First, on the contemporary processes of globalization in the context of the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century, paying special attention to both the global institutionalization of worldly life, and on the location of globality. Secondly, they related to the complex issue of young people's sense of identity, and most of all they stressed the need for educational support for the process of constructing a multi-dimensional self-image by young men. One of the important, and so often overlooked, dimensions of identity is currently spirituality and the possibility of shaping it. The original proposal is in this issue a sample to describe the present situation of young people from the perspective of the symbolism of the desert, understood both as a place full of dangers and without direction, as well as a place of spiritual renewal, a specific space for human freedom and at the same time



needs to be alone. Third—the subject of scientific discourse, which makes the issues of the crisis of the young generation associated with perceived phenomena of axiological transformation, which are taking place mainly in the field re-evaluate the fundamental values and their instrumentation. Characteristic to the social knowledge of the “generations of transition” is that, in the context of this knowledge, there is no awareness of their own generation’s identity. In addition, the intergenerational scale results in a lowering of the overall system of values and a growing tendency towards self-centeredness, on life for “itself” can be observed. It can also be noticed that increasing the importance of private-individuality, in contrast to the value of a social nature, promoted by various institutions (including educational institutions). It is shaping a new type of personality, for which the ideal of self-realization becomes understood as proceeding in accordance with its own abilities and the needs of the individual, what is more, it rejects all ideologies, including the religious. The aforementioned social, religious and educational activity, e.g. Young Kolping Association, can serve as an interesting example of the involvement of young people in building their own identity and strengthening their awareness of belonging to local groups and communities. Fourthly the need for lifelong learning, which has always been and still is an inherent feature of human life activity, naturally inscribed in human biographies is highlighted. At the same time, the Authors have emphasized the need to support the learning processes of individuals and societies, politics, economy, educational institutions and science.

The second part is an empirical examination of key issues in this volume which are related to both—Polish and foreign—research results of modern youth. The subject of this research has been conducted on the axiological preferences of Ukrainian students, conditioned by political, socio-economic and spiritual transformation processes taking place in this country over the past two decades. Moreover, the declared attitude of tolerance (including ethnic and religious) of young, educated Poles and their opinions on selected educational demands in the programs of political parties (running in the parliamentary elections in 2015) and on the particular method of financing education, privatization of education, enhance the function of caring in schools or resignation of testing in high school

are outlined. Finally, researchers from the University of Technology in Rezekne in Latvia present the measurable results of the national science program “Innovative solutions for tele-rehabilitation in the public schools in Latvia in the context of inclusive education.”

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