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Psycho-Social and Psycho-Political Diversity Within the Concept of Identity with Specific Reference to the Jewish Community.

INTRODUCTION

"Identity" (*tożsamość*) is a term well-known as the basis for many studies. It is also popularly and frequently used in everyday language. The comcept of identity is also ambiguous: sameness and authenticity, but the same term can also relate to a reference to something or someone, indicating limits, differences and, at the same time, similarities. The concept of identity relates to everyone, because we usually identify with something. We are someone. Namely, we have an identity and a defined individuality. We also belong to some group. Something always exists which defines us: our views, faith, race, gender, culture, social group, political group, etc.. The basis for discussing identity can be wider or specific (narrow) - for example, general identity (natural and community bonds) and identity within human bonds (social, cultural ties)[2]. Within studies, the idea of identity has many definitions and theoretical models developed by various humanities disciplines. This presentation on identity will fundamentally include the psycho-social and psycho-political position, taking in, where justified, the psychology of personality. A separate section will cover the characteristics of cultural examples of the functioning of a strong group identity, especially taking into account the Jewish community. It should be stressed, however, that this is not a case study, but rather a comparative analysis for which Jews are a particular, but not the only, example.

Man, as a naturally social being, has a particularly strong need for self-description and self-definition, as well as for an organised reality. The functioning of the individual in a complex world would be impossible without certain psychological strategies in dealing with the unlimited pieces of information which reach one. One of the most important motivational mechanisms is man's aspiration for the truth about the world and about oneself. A fundamental strategy for the ordering of knowledge about the world and organising information is to utilise formats. Our knowledge, particularly social knowledge, is "a comparatively long-lasting, cognitive representation of the social surroundings of an individual – social situations, people, their activities and property, the events in which they participate"[3]. The individual benefits from formats are that they enable rapid, non-onerous,

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[2] J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna. Studium zjawiska*, Wydawnictwo naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2008, s. 19.
[3] B. Wojciszke, *Teoria schematów społecznych. Struktura i funkcjonowanie jednostkowej wiedzy o otoczeniu społecznym*, Wyd. Ossolineum, Wrocław 1986, s. 7.

constant learning, cognitive analytical information and provide a sense of direction in new, unknown situations. Formats are, to a certain extent, related to the ideas of stereotypes, as well as categorisation. In each of these phenomena, that which Gordon Allport calls "simplified thought, economising on learning" occurs, in order for us to cope with the complexity of the world which surrounds us. In the case of formats, they are points of reference, types of matrices in the mind, and, using them, is an activity which has an adaptative character. The format is a well-known term thanks to the work of, among others, Jean Piaget. In modern times, it is used to determine the structural and functional elements of the semantic knowledge held by an individual but referring to a determined fragment of reality[4]. Amongst a few categories of formats (formats of objects, formats of events - i.e. scripts, attributive formats and the so-called meta-formats), is also the format "I", thanks to which we know who we are - i.e. we are able to describe ourselves in terms of action, emotion and motivation. "I" formats are "mental structures" which help us organise knowledge about ourselves"[5]. We act according to formats which regulate our behaviour and choices and it is possible to call this function "self-regulation". It is possible to regard formats as the "building materials" for identity.

In the simplest view of identity, there are three features: 1) similarity/difference between at least two objects, 2) the similarity can be vast so that any difference between the objects is lost, 3) features, by which a reason for the resemblance/difference exists (although they do not have to be all the features, but differentiated) – as a result, identity is "being the same" which, automatically in other contexts (as opposed to another object) may indicate "being different". Experience with another person is an important factor in the development of identity which arises "through identification (...) as well as by differentiating oneself (...) and finding one's own separateness"[6]. If identity is a determinant of many attitudes and decisions, including the social and political, it is possible to regard it as a category of self-awareness and self-regulation - it would be a type of "I" format. It speaks of regarding an individual's identity as a collection of "descriptions, representations of oneself" – it is attained by an entity, "a vision of oneself – more particularly, a vision of that which for self-characterisation is the most important, the most characteristic and specific"[7]. Taking into account certain types of personal choice activity, Kristen Monroe recognised them as expressions of the way an individual sees himself in relation to others, where that perception is, at the same time, a limitation of personal choice, Se states that "identity is primal in relation to one's values" and "acts of an ethnic character (...) result from deep-rooted

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[4] Ibid., s. 16.
[5] E. Aronson, T. D. Wilson, R. M. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2006, s. 127.
[6] H. Malewska-Peyre, *Ja wśród swoich i obcych*, w: P. Boski, M. Jarymowicz, H. Malewska-Peyre (red.), *Tożsamość a odmienność kulturowa*, Instytut Psychologii PAN, Warszawa 1992, s. 20.
[7] Ibid., s. 19.

instincts, predispositions and behavioural habits associated with the core of one's identity"[8]. Identity can be recognised as a fundamental, personal construct which, apart from representing one's own individuality, also sets elements of one's world view, emotions and values. It is possible to further state that "identity is more basic than consciously declared values. The core of that identity contains our dominant convictions of who we are, as well as what types of obligations and connections link us to other people"[9]. According to identity being understood in this way, choices are made according to closely determined possibilities resulting from who we are or in the manner in which we regard ourselves and the world around us. Understanding identity helps in explaining how the individual perceives and understands the world and how he singles himself out from others. It also helps to understand analysis of phenomena and the self-analysis which a person makes in the course of everyday choices and actions.

IDENTITY – SELECTED THEORETICAL VIEWS

The notion of identity has had many definitions[10]. Its fundamental components are also displayed variously. It is possible to say that the most basic and, at the same time, natural aspect of identity is one's gender. It is not only conditioned biologically. One's sense of gender is also determined by cultural factors which diversify the functions, attitudes and concepts of gender. The natural indicator of specific preferences for both genders is human psycho-physiology. However, biological gender does not always correspond with the psychological feelings of one's own gender. So, in that sense, one can also speak of specific transvestite, transsexual or androgynous identities. With natural identity no longer just in the biological, but also in the psychological dimension, it is possible to also call it an individual way of determining self-awareness, which developmental psychologists indicate has special significance and formation during the growing-up period. With its impact on identity, which is an essential aspect for the proper development of individuality, it is connected with the understanding of an " identity crisis". The identity crisis issue[11] is a subject especially dealt with by Erik Erikson in his theory of psycho-social development derived through psychoanalytical streams. Erikson noticed the dynamic and developmental aspects of identity. It is worth noting that Erikson's theory of development, written on the basis of crises appearing at every stage of development, was presented in the form of dichotomous stages. One of the crucial moments in development takes places at this stage: identity *versus* role dispersal. The beginning of the crisis is usually considered to appear upon self-reflection and attempting to answer the question: "Who am I"? For a young person, one's own valuable

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[8] K. Skarżyńska (red.), *Podstawy psychologii politycznej*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2002, s. 170.

[9] Ibid., s. 170.

[10] Obraz komplementarnej tożsamości jednostki – zob. np. J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna. Studium...*, op. cit.

[11] The identity crisis, particularly its negative development, has also been dealt with by Leon Festinger, author of the theory of social comparisons and the cognitive dissonance.

experiences and also those of one's social group are essential to successfully solving the crisis. There are also critical conditions which demand attaining successful identification. Among these are: an internal feeling of sameness and continuity, confirmation of this sameness through others, positive verification of one's self-image through contact with other people[12]. A positive identity is the result of a positive solution to the crisis and,as a consequence, the ability to find a place in the social world. It also means the creation of long-lasting connections, usually established at a young age, to values and ideals originating from early social templates (parents, teachers) and which are confirmed through the course of individual experiences. This successful solution (during the latter period of youth) leads to the formation of a clear picture of oneself – called a positive model identity by Paweł Bosk, since "individuality and authenticity link an individual into a culture rather than into internal emigration"[13]. A negative identity can be the result of a crisis fiasco, a lack of positive identification with one's own role, disorientation of self-preception (Leon Festinger adds here, a negative comparison to others) and even social alienation, by which "negative", here, means accepting attitudes against those presented by external role models. It can also lead to rebellion against them[14]. The social group, which has an immense influence on regulating this crisis, is the family. It is, at the same time, the smallest and the most basic social group. Since it is also formed through the influences of the past (personal, social, cultural factors, and others), one can say that it is the first, multi-dimensional model for the formation of a young person's identity. "The cultural identity of a society influences the development of social identity which manifests itself, not only in a determined lifestyle at a level of meeting needs, but also in the obtaining and running of a home, the obtaining of certain objects, organising the space of the home and its surroundings. (...) The family home is multi-functionally, fundamentally and practically the most important institution in the formation of social identity and, within that, political identity"[15]. The formation of identity is, however, connected not only with the issue of growing up. It is a process of change and is susceptible to the influences of individuals (or groups). It relies on "the emergence of the identity and/or group from an unrestricted number of its aspects (i.e. fragmentary identities – aspect identities) which, as an conhesive and integrated whole, form the autonomous identity, partially stereotyped (to a certain extent, permanent and stable), but which is balanced by the creative factors of identity"[16]. It is an "historical" process and so it has a starting time (the birth of an individual or the establishment of a group). It reaches back into heritage (traditional and cultural influences, norms, etc.) and contains all future, potential possibilities

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[12] Maria Kielar-Turska, *Rozwój człowieka w pełnym cyklu życia*, w: J. Strelau (red.), *Psychologia. Podręcznik akademicki*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2000, t. 1, s. 314.

[13] P. Boski, *O byciu Polakiem w ojczyźnie i o zmianach tożsamości kulturowo-narodowej na obczyźnie*, w: P. Boski, M. Jarymowicz, H. Malewska-Peyre (red.), *Tożsamość a odmienność...*, op. cit.: s. 85.

[14] Maria Kielar-Turska, *Rozwój człowieka...* op. cit.: s. 315; por.: H. Malewska-Peyre, *Ja wśród swoich...* op. cit.: s. 45-46.

[15] J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna polskich Żydów...*, op. cit.: s. 26-27.

[16] J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna. Studium...*, op. cit.: s. 46.

due to it being subject to constant change. In that sense, once can say that the so-called "ultimate identity" of an individual is described rather by a practical stage in a given context or historical moment and not from the perspective of entire existence (of the individual or group)[17]. And, even though it may usually appear coherent, that cohesion corresponds exactly to these moments in time. Malek Chebel, anthropologist and Islamic specialist, writes the following on identity: "it is a variable phenomenon, a characteristic of which is constancy and changeability"[18].

The concept of identity is connected with an individual's roots within the outside world (culture, social group, nationality and the like). It is associated with the processes of acquiring patterns of culture, socialisation, education, experience, etc.. In this instance, one can speak of the formation of social and cultural identity since, for the individual, one of the most important reference points which remains throughout life is the social group. So the association between personal and social identities remains especially strong. This was referred to Henri Tajfel, author of experiments relating to the so-called "minimal groups" and researcher into the phenomena of prejudice and social categorisation. Thanks to him, social identity is identified through membership of social groups[19]. This, and the function which social identity performs in an individual's life, affects, above all, interpersonal space, relationships and mutual influences on oneself and other people. Cultural identity, which one can call collective, remains under the fundamental influence of three components: cultural heritage, the component elements of a given culture, the external context including the influences of other cultures[20]. The definition of a very culture is, of course, an individual thing, upon which depends the manner of describing the exchanged components and functions as comprise a cultural identity. Both above-quoted expressions of determining identity - the wider, rather natural and the social, cultural – can be recognised as components of the so-called general identity. At the same time, this division suggests that an individual's functioning in the world is always a force conditioned by both individual factors (biology, personality, etc.) and collective factors. With regard to the latter, political psychology discusses the concept of identity on the basis of deliberations devoted to, among other things, nationalism, patriotism, statehood and beyond statehood[21]. Ethnocentrism (also see further) also stresses the special significance of comprehending identity, i.e. the creation of one's own group, within a feeling superiority and the excellence of its members. International relations – whether speaking overall or between groups – are founded on the bases of identity, on discerning the differences in combination with strong intra-group identification. These are important issues, not only for political and social sciences, but also for psychology. They also include issues relating to the fields of communications, conflicts and strategies for their

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[17] Ibidem: s. 46.
[18] H. Malewska-Peyre, *Ja wśród swoich...* op. cit.: s. 21.
[19] Ibid., s. 22.
[20] J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna. Studium...*, op. cit.: s. 27.
[21] An interesting example here could also be that of the stateless person and his/her identity.

resolution. Excellent examples on this subject could be the diverse group and individual orientations with respect to one's own nationality. They have numerous descriptions: "national consciousness and identity", "national assertiveness", "national loyalty", "national pride", "patriotism", "pseudo-patriotism", "national chauvanism" or simply "xenophobia" understood as a fear of "foreigners", as well as "nationalism"[22]. Each of these orientations, being an attitude, contains emotional, cognitive (a system of beliefs) and behavioural components specific to itself. An individual's relationship with respect to one's own group (me and my people) can be described as an attachment, as a feeling of superiority or dominance, as an identification which takes into account or excludes the values of a "foreign" group. As Tadeusz Bodio writes about the romantic pronouncements of patriotism, in the end, they can be called acts or sacrifices which are conditioned by emotion[23]. These attitudes constitute an important aspect of the personality. One can say that "they arrange themselves in people's minds as poorly connected syndromes of beliefs and emotions"[24].

A different look at the cultural and social indicators of identity, as well as the identity itself, provides a trend in the psychology of culture. This is a view for which the essential, theoretical basis was deep psychology. On the basis of the psychology of culture, identity is described as a compound drawn from the natural, social, psychological and cultural areas. Zenon Waldemar Dudek[25] explains each of these: 1) natural identity, also called biological, is connected with our bodily experiences, with a sensory perception of the world, but also with internal feelings, with impressions and the like; 2) social identity is formed from the social area, its customs and tradition (ethnicity, family, religion), through the fact of belonging or identifying with groups, due to the social processes initiated in the various areas of life (professional, public, organisational and the like), as well as through fulfilling responsibilities, etc.. The social sphere engages the individual both physically and psychologically. At the same time, it is this area which, in a meaningful way, can dominate psychological identity when social identification towers over a person's psychological individuality; 3) the area of psychological identity is an expression of the subjective processing and expression of all experiences present at the higher levels which include individual needs and values. It is an integrated area and the source of the full personality, called individual identity; 4) cultural identity influences the individual through models of culture which, through interaction and adoption, serve us in such situations when it is possible to experience their meaning, e.g. in initiation experiences: "Traditional, objective, cultural values, both material and symbolic, are crucial reference points to an individual's

[22] K. Skarżyńska (red.), *Podstawy psychologii...* op. cit.: s. 275.
[23] T. Bodio, *Między romantyzmem i pragmatyzmem. Psychopolityczne aspekty transformacji w Polsce*, Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, Warszawa 2000, s. 33.
[24] K. Skarżyńska (red.), *Podstawy psychologii...* op. cit.: s. 281.
[25] Psychiatra i psycholog zajmujący się teoriami w nurcie psychologii głębi, psychologii analitycznej oraz psychologią marzeń sennych i psychologią kultury. Typologia tożsamości i objaśnienie każdej z nich: Z. W. Dudek, *Doświadczenia transkulturowe*, w: Z. W. Dudek, A. Pankalla, *Psychologia kultury*, Wydawnictwo Psychologii i Kultury Eneteia, Warszawa 2008, s. 306-307.

psychological identity, allowing for the discovery and experiencing of the cultural roots of the psyche"[26]. Understanding identity in this manner, and taking into account aspects of development, Dudek singled out a) primitive identity (i.e. childhood), b) final identity (referred to here as "relational" due to the crucial relationships between me and others, between me and my self-image and between me and model standards), as well as c) the secondary identity, called trans-cultural (psychologically and culturally mature). As a result, encompassing the pyschology of culture, the dimensions of identity according to Dudek, comprise: **physical identity** corresponding to the natural sphere (biological), **psychological identity** (personality, individual consciousness and feelings, me), **social identity** (relationships, connections and social roles, authority figures in the external world, personality formed through the social environment, etc.), **cultural identity** (called here trans-psychological, spiritual, external models and cultural values, e.g. national models, historical values or religious dogma)[27]. In the course of life, the individual incessantly balances adaptation between the external and internal worlds. In other words, he/she can present him/herself to a greater or lesser degree collectively or individually. A person's personality, identifying with his/her own social role, "integrated" with the public personality (referred to here as a "mask" or "persona") poses the question: "Is the emperor wearing any clothes?" referring to individuals and a "blurred feeling of identity"[28].

IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SELECTED SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MECHANISMS

The dominant factor in shaping identity is, above all, social and cultural reality. History, language, religion and tradition are elements of identification for the individual.
They comprise phenomena of social categorisation. They are also areas which distinguish differences between groups but, above all, create a feeling of the separateness of one's own group. In psycho-social and psycho-political theoretical perspectives, one can say that the collective is a point of reference for identity. According to Krystyna Skarżyńska, intra-group cohesion produces a feeling of shared identity and, consequently, also reinforces separateness (national, ethnic, religious and the like). The group, here, is a crucial factor in verifying a sense of self. However, identity can also be the product of imitative adaptation to changing conditions (e.g. oppression), disadvantageous to the individual and/or group, the result of one's unrealised needs and, at the same time, induced through, for example, a dominant individual and/or group, deficiencies or a widely-understood social or political context. An example of this could be the reasons why the German lower-middle class universally approved of and supported (or simply identified with) the ideas of fascism, as described by Fromm in his work, "Escape From Freedom" (1941). Feelings of alienation, helplessness, loneliness or frustration are catalysts for defence mechanisms, types of psychological

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[26] Ibid., s. 307.
[27] Ibid., s. 310-312.
[28] Ibid., s. 303.

mechanisms. Which type of mechanism will be activated depends on the socio-cultural factors which influence the individual as well as that individual's initiative[29]. Talking about social character, Fromm takes into account a certain idealogical commonality, a unity of values, principles and norms, as well as historical-cultural conditions. Fromm also talks of a communal bonding which is characterised by a psychological readiness to accept a determined ideology – however, not just any ideology, but precisely one which will compensate for deficiencies, hopes and weaknesses. Consequently, this bonding develops that ideology which complements the socio-economic-psychological existence of that society from which it emanated[30]. Identity can also be a defence mechanism as in the case of Fromm's interpretation of the authoritarian personality, the term he uses for lower-middle class attitudes with respect to fascism. In a similar manner, it is possible, as Fromm wishes to do, to not only discuss how the attitude of individual identity is dependent on all totalitarian systems, but also on religious ideas (God, doctrines, and religious organisations). In this manner, a strong identity is created within members of organisations with distinct hierarchical structures and authorities (e.g. sects). Identity, described in this way, is also connected with the automatic (i.e. mindless) concept of conformism, which Fromm regarded as a form of escape from freedom and from a sense of weakness. The identity of world replaces the identity of the individual, the needs of others replace one's own needs, a strong need for acceptance and belonging, continuity and confirmation of self-worth not only eliminate criticism but, consequently, individualism also[31]. Acccording to Fromm's interpretation, people who lack self-esteem, security, with the basis for their identity endangered, will be susceptible to identify with a strong leader, a strong ideology, a system which compensates for their deficiencies and, at the same time, will distance themselves from (not ruling out open hostility against) minority groups, from dissent and from non-conformity. Superficial identity, understood in this manner, <u>seems to be</u> a form of psychological superstructure. It can be a tool used to explain the willingness of a weaker group (here, the lower-middle class) to identify with Nazi doctrine[32].

Collective identity, understood as identification with a group, is connected with the social phenomenon of categorisation. Attitudes linked to social categorisation, i.e. division into groups (differentiating between "us" and " them"), as well as identification with one's own group (racial, ethnic, national), are formed quite early in the life of an individual – between seven and thirteen years of age. They are also an important determinant of political attitudes and of political activity in adult life[33]. Skarżyńska notices that strong identification

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[29] U. Jakubowska, *Preferencje polityczne...*, op. cit.: s. 18.
[30] Ibid., s. 19.
[31] Ibid., s. 24.
[32] Ibid., s. 24; por. K. Korzeniowski, *Autorytaryzm i jego psychopolityczne konsekwencje*, w: K. Skarżyńska (red.), *Podstawy psychologii...*, op. cit. s. 59-79.
[33] K. Skarżyńska, *Człowiek a polityka. Zarys psychologii politycznej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2005, s. 127.

with one's own ethnic group and a positive perspective regarding one's own group influence a host of psychological factors. She counts among them self-worth, a positive relationship with and functioning within one's social environment. One can say that it also strongly influences the permanence and strength of values, attitudes and ideas connected with the group. The individual's identity stands as a crucial predicator of its activities, choices and goals. It is also relatively immune to external influences coming from outside one's own group. Strong identification can, however, lead to isolation from the rest of society. We see this problem, not only with ethnic minorities or with racial differences, but also with groups of a religious character and with religious minorities. Their status in the wider community is conditioned, on the one hand, by the character of the group itself (open or closed) and, on the other hand, by community attitudes towards that group (the insularity of the group can be a secondary reaction to negative, or even aggressive, relations with the majority)[34]. Here, identity appears as a borderline concept, since it is associated with the dynamic relationship between the minority and the majority. Coexistence depends, to a large extent, on similarity, on the level of similarity of purpose, as well as upon needs – each of these factors could also be the cause of inter-group conflict. It should be said, however, that in some situations, negative attitudes by groups towards each other require neither knowledge of each other nor direct contact. Here, it is arguably not so much real interests, but rather the values of the groups themselves. In extreme cases, minority groups (e.g. when the group is fairly defenceless and easily distinguishable) can become "scapegoats". This term arises in a situation when a crisis has no rational explanation and when community frustration demands some sort of acceptable explanation. A frequently used example of this phenomenon is the attitude of Germany towards its Jewish minority during a time of fierce inflation, poverty, mass bankruptcy and social demoralisation following World War I. In Nazi Germany, it became easy to recognise the Jewish minority as being "responsible". Here, the "scapegoat" became rationalised through social guilt for an "economic catastrophe". Contemporary anti-Semitism can be regarded as a related phenomenon[35]. An analagous mechanism existed in America's attitude towards the influx of the Chinese during the course of almost the entire 19th Century due to business and economic conflicts arising between rival stores, or on the road to gaining freedom and independence in the case of countries within the former USSR or in the Balkans[36].

The relations of minority groups with respect to the majority can, however, lead to a closeness, the arising of a strong inter-dependence, particularly when one of them (usually the majority) holds authority and status. Skarżyńska writes here of the phenomenon of minority groups "taking root" in a culture, where the alternatives are identification with either

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[34] Zob. np. E. Barker, *Nowe ruchy religijne*, Kraków 1997, Z. Pasek, *Nietolerancja religijna jako skutek społecznych działań przeciw sektom*, [w:] *Sekty. Uwarunkowania i niebezpieczeństwa w III RP*, St. Pamuła i A. Margasiński (red.), Częstochowa 2001; s. 67-77.

[35] E. Aronson, T. D. Wilson, R. M. Akert, *Psychologia społeczna...*, op. cit.: s. 374-375.

[36] Ibid., s. 375.

one's own ethnic group or with the main current of dominant culture. In this respect, she singled out two positions: 1) linear – a model of acculturation in which the individual identifies him/herself with his/her own group or with the majority, as well as 2) bidirectional (so–called "multicultural", also called the "multiculturalisation" of the individual) – it is a model of acculturation in which a person identifies him/herself simultaneously with his/her own ethnic group and with the main current of dominant culture[37]. The issue of "taking root" in a culture also affects the individual in the position of an immigrant, which can lead to an identity crisis caused by a change of cultures. "Taking root" or integration in a new culture is a slow process, usually taking generations (the third generation recognises itself as being integrated)[38]. Both examples – collective and individual – are connected with the concepts of acculturation, assimilation and cultural adaptation[39], each of which is concerned with identity transformation. These phenomena can occur not only between groups, but also between a group and an individual. They are expressed in identity transformations and can often result in an identity crisis. These processes, or even a society with a multicultural character, support, moreover, the shaping of a so-called hybrid identity. Tadeusz Paleczny uses the expression "the universalisation of cultural identity" which can appear in pluralist societies where one can observe the "overlapping and co-existence of various models of pluralism". For him, it is hybrid bi-culturalism (trans-culturalism). Paleczny also calls it a mechanism for which a good description would be "trans-culturalism"[40]. The concept of a "hybrid" indicates the mixing of two differing elements. It is used to describe, for example, a "mongrel", the result of parents of two different races, as an individual being the result of crossing genetically-different individuals and the like. So, "hybrid identity" will be the term for describing the sense of identity in a individual who develops a parallel identification with his/her own group (the cultural identity of a minority group) and with a foreign group (the cultural identity of the majority). The cohesion of such an identity could depend upon: the cultural similiarity of the minority and majority, the legal freedom that an individual is given in a specific society and, at the same time, the amount of freedom that minority groups are given according to law. Paleczny writes that " these identities overlap and cross during the course of complex processes of national assimilation, racial hybridisation, religious and ethnic amalgamation, leading to the establishment of a new muticultural society"[41].

The concept of identity can be considered in terms of adaptive functions, particularly as it relates to groups. Both in social psychology as well as in the psychology of politics, the point of departure here are the achievements of the evolutionists. We need the group and

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[37] K. Skarżyńska, *Człowiek a polityka. Zarys...* op. cit.: s. 127-128.
[38] H. Malewska-Peyre, *Ja wśród swoich...* op. cit.: s. 15.
[39] J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna. Studium...*, op. cit.: s. 42-44; wyjaśnienie pojęć.
[40] T. Paleczny, *Procesy uniwersalizacji tożsamości kulturowej czy amerykański wariant procesów narodotwórczych społeczeństw wielokulturowych? Kilka socjologicznych refleksji*, w: http://www.isr.wsmip.uj. edu.pl/ publikacje / procesy.doc. [pobrano: 12 listopad 2009].
[41] Ibid., [pobrano: 12 listopad 2009].

other units for various reasons: 1) biological (enabling survival), 2) social (as sources of information and orientation; according to Festinger and others, they are sources of "social comparison" for us, 3) psychological (due to the need for bonds, affiliations, a sense of security)[42]. From the first half of the 20th Century, the psychology of politics took into account that evolution could influence the formation of organisms in such a way that its characteristics served the interests of a local group, a kind of ecosystem, and it clarified, among other things, the need to coexist within the group. The theory of family selection is used here[43]. With result of the evolutionary model explaining some socio-political phenomena, there is interpretation of ethnocentrism as a special example of group identity. The result of the evolutionary model explanation of some socio-political phenomena is the interpretation of ethno-centrism as a specific example of group identity. Ethno-centrism is a phenomonon of identification and, at the same time, an elevation of one's own ethnic group. Within evolutionary psychology, it was treated as "a widespread feature of human co-existence"[44]. Ethnocentrism is also a special manifestation of the phenomenon of public categorization which is common and present in every culture. It can also affect other dimensions: social, political, religious[45]. Among others, William D. Hamilton and his theory of family selection gave rise to the first studies of the evolutionary theory of ethno-centrism[46]. On the basis of analysing specific aspects of human lifestyle over the course of man's evolution, during which small groups were created of closely-related individuals (hunter-gatherer communities), the conclusion was that ethno-centrism is a form of broader family selection, but also that this selection applies only with respect to the strongest blood relationships. Of course, an ethnic group is not a family group in an evolutionary sense of the word. One could ask the question: If blood relationship is really not the bond here, what is its equivalent? The human tendency to conform, "to accept ideas and practices common within the scope of groups", is "an adaptation which serves to acquire ideas or information regarded as good by other individuals within the population"[47]. Conformity is one of consequences of the fact that man is a social being[48]. It is also beneficial for the group – better cooperation, collective activity aimed at benefitting the group as a whole, better mutual understanding. The cohesion of the group will depend on the existence of close relationships and the sharing of common norms, on the use of a shared code (e.g. language), on shared customs, legal provisions, traditions, religion, etc.. "People everywhere utilise the characteristics of group

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[42] C. K. Oyster, *Grupy*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2002. Rozdz. 2: Dlaczego ludzie tworzą i wybierają grupy: dlaczego? Podejście funkcjonalne do problemu powstawania grup, s. 57-65.

[43] J. Sidanius, R. Kurzban, *Ewolucyjne podejścia do zachowań politycznych*, w: D. O. Sears, L. Huddy, R. Jervis (red.), *Psychologia polityczna*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2008, s. 133-157 (134, 136).

[44] Ibid., s. 147.

[45] Typowym przykładem podkreślającym specyfikę pojęcia odrębności mogą być cechy zawodowe lub kasty, o których będzie mowa w dalszej części.

[46] Sidanius, R. Kurzban, *Ewolucyjne podejścia...* op. cit.: s. 147.

[47] Ibid., s. 148-149.

[48] E. Aronson, *Człowiek istota społeczna*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1995, s. 26.

identity, 'badges" of culture such as social customs, traditions, body-art, style of dress, hairstyles, language and dialect (...) ethnic marking could have come into existence in order to enable positive identification of people who should imitated" – and so there are cultural equivalents of the evolutionary concept of socio-cultural "blood-relationships". Here, they are not literally related, but members of a "socially-invented blood-related" group[49]. Authors of the evolutionary approach to public and political behaviour explain this phenomenon in the context of the typical, human ability to symbolise, which is also regarded as a social phenomenon. As a result, "due to the human ability to create symbols and abstracts, what began as a form of cooperation in one's own group and ethno-centrism, based on a level of genetic blood relationship (family selection), became transformed into an alternative type of cooperation within one's own group and ethnocentrism on a much wider scale, including an almost infinitely, large great number of socially-defined 'relatives'"[50]. Such a symbolic brotherhood, being a relic of actual blood-related bonds, can create a situation where individuals think the same way, have shared interests, similar purposes, needs, etc.. This "socially-invented blood relationship" could, perhaps, concern every group in which strong dependencies have been created.

The phenomenon of categorisation, manifesting itself in the different spheres of men's functioning, relies on the clear distinguishing of oneself and one's own group from "others", "strangers" and "them". The reasons for categorisation can be trivial, but the cohesion within such an established group will always be real and permanent. The feeling of sameness within a group includes the following elements: a) cognitive (a way of defining reality, a common language, symbols defining intra-group bonds), b) emotional (a way of feeling emotions, an emotional relationship with reality, to aspects of the social and political world), c) outlook (a common history, cultural values and norms). Division according to similiarities creates a sense of group identity, while at the same time creating circumstances of emerging separateness. However, it is possible to notice a decrease in the feeling of separateness resulting from categorisation (particularly when one's group is a nationality) – i.e. a lessening in favouring "ours" and discriminating against "others" – in a situation of intra-group diversity. It is possible to suppose that, under this influence, as well as thanks to shared experience with the "others", the inter-group gap is changing[51]. The change can also be prompted by a primitive, uncertain self-identity. It is possible to say that the less explicit and distinct the self-determination of the individual, the smaller will be the strength of his/her identification. Not only do individual features decide the strength of identifcation, but they decide the strength and nature group identity, the type of culture (western, eastern, developed, traditional and the like). The best example of the concept of collective identity and, at the

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[49] Sidanius, R. Kurzban, *Ewolucyjne podejścia...* op. cit.: s. 149.
[50] Ibid., s. 149.
[51] K. Skarżyńska (red.), *Podstawy psychologii politycznej*, op. cit.: s. 285.

same time, absolute identification, could be the traditional society which is the subject of anthropological research.

To the features characteristic of traditional communities which, at the same time, indicate their collective identity, beside alliteration, a lack of historical perspective, anonymity of products, a small development dynamic and a subjective relationship with reality, etc.,[52], can be added a knowledge of one's culture reflected in social awareness, in the life of each individual or simply replacing an awareness of "I" with an awareness of "We"[53]. Here, cultural patterns are reflected in the individual's life: "Culture in these communities constitutes a strongly integrated whole. All norms are important and social control includes all aspects of an individual's life. Rules of conduct are adopted once and for all time as being natural and as being the only possibility. The problem of choice regarding rules of conduct does not exist and there is no difference between 'is' and 'should be'"[54]. It is a type of exclusive or absolute group identity, established by only one possible order, but also through the specificity of a social and political structure in which is reflected a special understanding of relationships (family and extended-family connections)[55]. With societies of this type, we no longer speak of categorisation due to the fact that, in the collective consciousness, only one group exists – ours: "As a people, we are always '<u>us</u>' and never '<u>them</u>'. For this reason, the majority of ethnonyms (names of tribes) translate simply as 'people' (...) Tribal identification is based upon the principle of 'us and them'. 'Us' are those who live as I do, in a manner similar to mine, living with me (*orbis interior*). 'Them' are all the rest, living in another world (*orbis exterior*). Tribal awareness is differentiation based on a negative and not a positive principle"[56]. It is the exclusivity of one's own group within reality. Within this consciousness there is no discrimination between "us" and "them". They just do not exist (within the meaning of our existence). Speaking within the realm of the realistic psychology of politics present within nationalist attitudes and the membership of nationalist groups which depend on common descent and shared personality features, it is noticeable that they exist in order to reinforce conditioning resulting from genetic and biological similiarity. In describing these bonds, S. Ossowski used the concept of so-called "substantialist bonding"[57]. The description of "substantialist" in referring to the aforementioned traditional societies and to collective consciousness, appears justified, specifically in relation to socio-cultural and mythical-religious mentalities within which, blood-relationships are factual and not symbolic. In the case of national bonds, they are rather the remnants of an archaic mentality which exist more to emphasise national identity. For example, "You cannot be a Pole if you do not have

[52] A. Szyjewski, *Etnologia religii*, Wyd. Nomos, Kraków 2008, s. 47-54.
[53] Ibid., s. 62.
[54] Ibid., s. 48.
[55] Ibid., s. 60-61.
[56] Ibid., s. 63.
[57] K. Skarżyńska (red.), *Podstawy psychologii politycznej...*, op. cit.: s. 287.

Polish blood"[58]. It is worth mentioning that, in contrast to an identity which describes, for example, an ethnic, historical-geographic, traditional, religious or gender group etc., there is also a type of identity created with the aim of unity and generated through a joint effort by individuals. An example of this could be the European Union – an artificial creation linking democratic countries, a phenomenon conceived on a broad scale of international integration (encompassing social, economic and political aspects).

The concept of identity is also connected with differentiating between the ideas of belonging and identification. In Leonie Huddy's view, at the foundation of an individual's relationship with a group are subjective ideas about identifying with the group or an objective group membership – both phenomena were examined from a behavioural and political preference aspect. Subjective identification means identification with the group to which the individual belongs by acknowledging one's own membership of that group, rather than through the opinion of others. A new psycho-social concept talks about social identity where membership is objective (given to us, rather than chosen by us). Huddy, however, draws attention to the fact that it is exactly subjective identification which is the important element present in the understanding of membership, in political science as well as in social psychology[59]. Huddy draws a further differentiation from the concepts of subjective and objective identification: group membership and group identification. "Membership", according to Huddy, is to be included in a group by others without the necessity of inwardly sensing any feeling of connection with that group. While "identifying oneself" is to be included in the group of one's own volition, with an internalised sense of connection. Here, the first was objective inclusion, the latter a subjective feeling of membership. In addition, objective membership does not need to go hand in hand with a subjective feeling of connection. In Huddy's opinion, membership can be a "precursor to identification". Moreover, identification is narrower and an internalised membership[60]. Membership and identification are two types of connections of an individual with a group which can, but do not have to, co-exist. Subjective identification would be specifically peculiar to party identification or religion (but rather referring to being part of a religious group through a conscious act of freewill rather than membership through birth) etc.. Membership, however, can be illustrated using the example of an ethnic group, which a person would not usually join, but would "belong to automatically" by virtue of being born into it or being brought up within it. One of the beliefs about ethnicity, according to Jerzy Szacki, is exactly the fact that a person's connection with his/her people is not voluntary, but is dictated by birth and set "forever"[61]. It is not the result of a subjective feeling. It is not an act of freewill, but a natural and "top-down" connection. Another such example of membership is an adherence to an

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[58] Ibid., s. 287.
[59] L. Huddy, *Tożsamość grupowa a spójność polityczna*, w: D. O. Sears, L. Huddy, R. Jervis (red.), *Psychologia polityczna...*, op. cit.: s. 468-469.
[60] Ibid., s. 469.
[61] K. Skarżyńska (red.), *Podstawy psychologii politycznej...*, op. cit.: s. 276.

ethnic religion - natural in the sense that the group, into which the individual is born, automatically links him/her with a defined, religious system (such religions would include, for example, judaism, hinduism, shinto). In the history of religious systems, an excellent example would be one of the dominant religions of Japan – traditional shinto. A characteristic feature of this religion is the "deep nationalism that lies at its base". This indicates that, while other known religious systems speak their truths to mankind in general, shinto relates only to the Japanese[62]. The *Kami* (the shinto deities) did not create mankind, only the Japanese. They are linked to primitive, ancestor worship and tribal deities. For this reason, every Japanese, - "and only him/her, whether he/she wishes it or not, and without regard to whatever religion he/she may follow, from birth, belongs to shinto" – and the *kami* only look after their own people, not everyone[63].

In summing up the abovementioned issues, it should be said that man not only has a need for self-definition. Defining reality is an equally strong need, i.e. identifying its elements, putting them into some sort of order, into places, into groups. The same principle used within the world of plants, animals and objects can also be utilised to classify society. Definition is directed towards objects (animate and inanimate) of the external world – some are closer to us and some are more distant, but it is precisely their closeness which dictates their ability to be described or defined. Classifying social reality can be based variously: resulting from natural factors (gender, race, age-group, ethnicity and religion), or socio-economic (marital status, social class, caste, professional group, etc.). Further, it can be said that this definition of reality has an objective character when, in accordance with determined rules, knowledge or experiences, we categorise objects in accordance with widely-accepted knowledge about the world. The subjective character of this mechanism shows through when, against all evidence, with a lack of adequate knowledge, experience or justifiable rules, we categorise without any foundation. Based on this mechanism, we can subjectively discern features in an individual (e.g. on the basis of knowing his/her origins), which objectively may not exist or have not been revealed to any degree. Aleksander Hertz offers an historical illustration of this phenomenon when he writes about the caste system applied to Jews in Poland (also see further). Jews were easy to define on the basis of their material, characteristic differences (e.g. their dress) and also the non-material (e.g. their language or behaviour). But this definition became problematic, writes Hertz, from mid-way through the 19th Century when, as a result of assimilation with the local culture, they actually became identical to the rest of society (not only with regard to appearance or behaviour, but by the taking up of occupations), and so the Jew "no longer matched the model definition when had been created"[64]. Since, speaking objectively, a Jew 1) either had to subjectively display the subjectively discerned characteristics of a "typical Jew", 2) or the definition needed to be

[62] S. Arutjunow, G. Swietłow, *Starzy i nowi bogowie Japonii*, PIW, Warszawa 1973, s. 12.
[63] Ibid., s. 12-13.
[64] A. Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze polskiej*, Biblioteka „WIĘZI", Warszawa 2003, s. 101.

changed. Hertz mentions, here, the applied, determinate interpretations of appearance, behaviour and manner of speech which, somehow, established the known model, because this is the way an interpretative mechanism operates, "That things did not fit into place was a matter of indifference. Objectively, they did not have to. But, subjectively, it was noticed and noted (...) we use abstractions here and we import real people into these abstractions. We look at these people through the templates of our definitions. We see these people through masks, through the collective experiences and traditions which are ascribed to them"[65]. Taking into account that the phenomena written about here refer to relations towards minority groups and that, in atitudes towards them, a significant behaviour catalyst is the emotional factor, then hostile behaviour towards members of these groups, based on their definition, can bring about serious conflicts. For example, attacking an individual on the basis of a schematic (stereotype), that he is an "aggressive type" (according to the stereotype, negroes are aggressive) will probably provoke an aggressive reaction which, subjectively, could be treated as a confirmation of the held definition whereas, objectively, it could be jusr an ordinary reaction to a provocation.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ILLUSTRATIONS

The sociological term, stratification, taken as social layering, expresses the fact that, on the main basis of human resources which include, not only material wealth, power and prestige, but also cultural and symbolic assets, social groups clearly differentiate themselves and fit into a hierarchy. Included in this phenomenon are various explanations (natural and even supernatural) of the fact that people are different from each other. Different views on social class exist both on the issue of definition as well as on methods and criteria for their division and for dependence on the ideological system to which they apply. In a class system, a typical criterion for membership of a social class is income and profession. In modern times, writes Huddy, the criteria for linking an individual to a given socio-economic class are less strict[66], apart from the actual issue of stratifying society on the basis of standard of living (i.e. disposable income), one can say that, particularly regarding social class, one should take into account the difference between real income (objective membership), and a subjective sense of an individual's prosperity (subjective identification). In a caste system (social standing), the index is the caste itself, occupying a determined place in society. That "occupancy of a place" Hertz recognises as a crucial characteristic of a caste system. It is connected with a hierarchical definition with the aid of various criteria, and also having its own social, economic or religious justifications. For example., castes were designated as being either "higher" or "lower" (on the basis of privilege level which differentiated between

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[65] Ibid., s. 102.
[66] L. Huddy, *Tożsamość grupowa...* op. cit.: s. 470.

the nobility, the peasantry, the bourgeois and the Jews in old Poland[67]), or "clean" and "unclean" (as one of the most important criteria present in the division of Indian society – see further). It is worth giving further considering to these examples.

A particular form of the caste system, of which determinism was a characteristic (i.e. division being treated as the principle, prime fundamental, emanating from the divine), developed in the history of many Indo-European societies - among others, ancient Iran (four tiers), or ancient India (four classes, *varnas* from Sanskrit, warna – colour)[68]. In the case of Indian society, they are not exactly castes, but a common method of designating the four classes of that term (Brahmins, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras). *Castas* (tribes, clans, families) – is a term which was used in the 16th Century by the Portuguese observing Indian society thus stratified. The term "caste", however, was applied not only with reference to Indian class (varnas), but also to typical caste, i.e. the Hindu "jati"[69]. The difference between castes and varnas relates to, among other things, the fact that castes changed, their number increased or decreased, while there have always been four holy varnas. But the caste system is not only characteristic of ancient (e.g. Egyptian, Indian) societies. Contemporary, developed, industrial organizations and democratic societies have also known it. It was common in the United States where an example of a caste were the negroes[70]. It can have an economic or business character. The grouping of Jews in Poland usually had such a character.

IDENTITY IN THE GROUPING OF JEWS

Hertz, writing about the presence of Jews in Polish culture, differentiates two forms of Jewish groupings – caste and ghetto – by which he regards the caste as broader and including an entire group (along with its factions) within a given territory, while the ghetto is a narrower unit, referring to a closed group in given area. The difference also refers to the degree of isolation. In case of the ghetto, we are dealing rather with territorial isolation, the consequence of which is also cultural and social confinement. In the case of caste, that second factor – cultural and social isolation – seems to become the fundamental feature. So, in the entire territory of Poland, in this manner, Jews constituted a caste. But in specific regions, during the occupation, they were were grouped together into ghettos, e.g. Warsaw, Kraków, Częstochowa or Łódż. At the same time, Hertz regards that, despite the presence of other minorities like, for instance, the Roma, only the Jews had the clear, characteristic and extreme features of a caste[71]. Hertz further regards that the Jews, as a caste,

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[67] A. Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze...*, op. cit.: s. 96.
[68] A. L. Basham, *Indie*, PIW, Warszawa 1964, s. 62, 183-184.
[69] Ibid., s. 196.
[70] A. Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze...*, op. cit.: s. 91, 95.
[71] Ibid., s. 91.

are a specific discriminant of their history within Poland. "Polish Jews (their history) will never be understood unless we take into account the fact that they constituted a caste, and a caste creates specific, interpersonal attitudes"[72]. Independent of geographic and historic conditions, membership of castes is connected with a clearly determined identity where social and cultural identity constitute a special component. To a greater degree (in today's world), it also has more of a social than a legal character[73]. A caste system for the Jews is an essential aspect of not only shaping their intra-group identity. As a feature of a community living in the land of other cultures, it was also an important factor in shaping the general character of the identity of those cultures. The caste system, as a result of the emancipation of the Jews, was also the basis for changing them into an ethnic national group. Mizgalski noticed this when writing about the political identity of Jews: "The political identity of Jewish political groups constituted an essential element in the process of segmentation of political life both inside their own community, as well as in the political system of the state"[74].

Certainly, castes constituted a form of separation. Sometimes, it was imposed – taking the form of a ghetto. The idea of ghettos ("a ghetto system of segregation"[75]), as specially-allocated places in cities for settlement of the Jewish community, was already known in ancient times. They were also known in Islamic cities, as well as European, in the early Middle Ages[76]. An example could be Venice which, as an important trade state from the 10th Century, became an important place of settlement for Jews. The settlers, mainly due to their huge number, became the object of disdain. They not only had appointed for them a separate area to live (the island of Spinalunga in the 13th Century, and later on the mainland in Mastre), but also clothing - at first, it was a yellow sign, later a yellow hat and finally a red hat[77]. By virtue of a state decision (in the years 1515-1516), Jews were enclosed into specially allocated areas of the city, e.g. *ghetto nuovo* – an old foundry, a section surrounded by a high wall separating it from the rest of the city, which was first ghetto, this area, inhabited by Italian Jews of German origin[78]. Ghettos, as social creations, had an ambivalent character. On the one hand, isolation was a form of pressure and imposed, upon the isolated group, the status of "second class citizens". On the other hand, the ghetto "ensured security and a certain kind of comfort". In the case of the Jews, it enabled, "in many respects, an easier compliance with the

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[72] Ibid., s. 114.
[73] Ibid., s. 93.
[74] J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna polskich Żydów...*, op. cit.: s. 23.
[75] P. Johnson, *Historia Żydów*, Wydawnictwo PLATAN, Kraków 2004, s. 243.
[76] Ibid., s. 237.
[77] Ibid., s. 236.
[78] Ibid., s. 237.

dictates of the law". It created "the possibility of internal, social control"[79]. It can be said that such a form of separation of a minority provided them with the possibility of cementing cultural values and traditions without, at the same time, exposing themselves to the loss of their specific, separate identity. More often than not, however, the Jewish community was faced with a choice (often imposed upon individuals by their own community) – separation with the retention of one's own identity, or assimilation meaning leaving the caste and associated with changing religion and customs.

Besides the concepts of the caste or the ghetto which are connected with the issue of identity, there is the Diaspora, i.e. Jewish community clusters dispersed amongst many European nations. Life in the Diaspora gave rise to the creation of a complex and specific (social and political) Jewish identity. Jerzy Mizgalski calls it a political, diaspora identity. "It constitutes a specifically localised, political identity. The places of settlement and the lives of Jews, as well as the geographic location of these population centres, all had a specific effect on their political identity"[80]. But Mizgalski also draws attention to a possible typology of political identity, for doctrinal as well as ideological considerations, within such social creations as a diaspora (He provides, here, the example of Polish Jews from Częstochowa).

The concept of identity within a Jewish caste particularly involves one important bond - religion. Judaism drew Jews together within: 1) an historical dimension – speaking of how it was, how it is and how it will be (for Jewish orthodoxy, it means an unchanging *halacha* in the face of civil and cultural changes), as well as 2) a cultural dimension, because Jewish law also speaks about how to live according to customs, social, political, economic and interpersonal principles. In practice, they regulate every aspect of a Jew's life, including relationships with non-Jews. Religious law sanctified the entire life of a Jew and, compared with other European communities, the secular and sacred spheres, here, are closer to one another. In this respect, it is possible to find a resemblance to the Muslim community, in as much as Islamic law and religion are closely connected. It is actually difficult to speak clearly here about spirituality as a category of differentiation (like, for example, in eastern religions). It is an element at the same level as praying, doing business or fighting. Islam, like Judaism, was a religious-legal system. In the context of Judaism, Mizgalski speaks here of a legal-religious-cultural triad as being specific to the caste of the Jews[81]. Already in its origins, Islam became a new law for the Arab nation, but grew out of its cultural (pre-Muslim) roots. Established by Mohammed, Arab states were democratic in their principles, arabic in their traditions

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[79] Ibid., s. 238.
[80] J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna polskich Żydów...*, op. cit.: s. 41.
[81] Ibid., s. 51.

and islamic in their ideals. With Muslim solidarity, a strong feeling of freedom on the one side and an absolute fraternal and religious belief on the other side, they are descended from their Bedouin brothers with whom Mohammed lived. The Arab term, ʿāṣabiyya – meaning "group solidarity", is linked here to a particular legal-religious-cultural identity and is traditionally emphasized by Islam and instilled within the entire Muslim community[82].

JEWISH IDENTITY – MYTH OR REALITY

Does the concept of categorisation have anything to do with race? It can be said that it does if we can distinguish biological, psychological, social or cultural differences between races. While physical appearances help to determine a certain class with common physical characteristics, using cultural or social criteria in the selection of a "race" is social mythology[83]. Hertz drew attention to this describing Jews as a "race" artificially created within a cultural-social mentality. Referring to the anthropological understanding of the human race, the author simultaneously rejects the notion of a "Jewish race" as well as a "semitic race". "Jewish" relates to culture, tradition and religion, as well as to a people and its history. It is also an issue of membership and/or identification. One is a Jew through birth within a defined population or eventually through the acceptance of Judaism. But nothing changes regarding anatomical features (accepting the fact that caricature is not an inborn, anatomical feature!). For as much as "semitic" refers to a language group, writes Hertz, and has nothing to do with anthropology, it is equally unjustified in talking about a "semitic race" as it is in talking about "an English-speaking race"[84]. Phenomena such as anti-Semitism and racism show just how long-lasting are mankind's convictions about "mythical races" – so much so that, in categorisation, people utilise the easiest, available criteria – appearance and behaviour. In the case of appearance, the criterion which differentiates others is basically skin colour while, in the case of behaviour, it is usually constituted by reactions to an accepted world view which is usually formed collectively and which corresponds to some group. It can be treated as an example which well illustrates categorisation based upon behavour – a phenomenon tracing its beginnings back to the 13th Century when the first shelter for the deranged was set up in Bedlam. Until the beginning of the 18th Century, everyone who was anti-social, odd or suspect ended up in Bedlam. It was not so much a place of treatment or resocialisation as a separation of those who were "different" (and this encompassed much – from madness to people extracted from society by law). The word "different", being difficult to determine or to define (e.g. the levels of knowledge about madness at that time), automatically meant "threatening" and should be separated from society.

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[82] J. Bielawski, *Komentarz*, w: *Koran*, tłum. J. Bielawski, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1986, s. 776.

[83] A. Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze...*, op. cit.: s. 65.

[84] Ibid., s. 65.

Differentiating others (as "foreign") is usually based upon two premises – firstly on objectively discerned differences (appearance, behaviour) and, secondly, on the subjective attitude to those discerned. It is possible to say that the first is not sufficient for a differentiated group to become the subject of hatred, enmity or isolation. We learn an attitude to a differentiated group through imitating others, upbringing and socialisation. This attitude is not the result of the simple observation of social reality. Even if the differences are originally indiscernible, it is the result of the subjective assessment of people (e.g. discovering their origins). They can be distinguished secondarily. One can say that objective sameness (with another person) becomes the subjective differentiation (from that person). Hertz draws attention to this fact, writing, among other things, of the situation of the Jews in Poland and also in other European countries – while someone's Jewish origins were unknown by society, then they were no different. However, when their origin was revealed, neighbours began to discern the features of someone with Jewish origins, more often than not relating them to past behaviours on the basis of a retroactive stereotype: "the subjective moment, the psycho-social moment has a decided significance on how we discern and judge external differences, even when they occur objectively. In many instances, such differences are seen with the eyes, but not with the mind. They are not registered as something important, as something which could be the basis for social differentiation, social categorisation or classification. But, at the same time, they are noticed and judged differences which objectively do not exist or, in other circumstances, would not draw attention to themselves. They are noticed when, as a result of certain, socially-accepted assumptions, it is expected that they must exist and be noticeable"[85]. That which was called here "socially-accepted assumptions" could be the public interest, professed values and a worldview and could rather also be a natural bond. The phenomenon of group identity can be divided according to the criterion of social bonds, "fixing the two limits of socialisation. The first limit of the scale sets out the type of local-community bonds arising from blood-ties. The second limit of the scale ends with organised, institutional types of bonds represented by the state"[86]. The first of these limits is typical of natural groups (closer to the notion of general identity). The other, however, is for a group which evolved to the position of a nation or state. Mizgalski calls them "the highest group level of social bonds"[87] in which blood-ties took on a determined, symbol for national differentiation. It is worth noting that the term "nation or people" belongs rather to a European socio-cultural reality and to European socio-scientific terminology. While in other societies (e.g. immigrant societies such as USA, Canada), the notion of nation or people appears rather less often than its equivalent which is the "ethnic group" or "ethnic identity"[88].

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[85] Ibid., s. 70.
[86] J. Mizgalski, *Tożsamość polityczna polskich Żydów...*, op. cit.: s. 16.
[87] Ibid., s. 16.
[88] P. Boski, *O byciu Polakiem w ojczyźnie...* op. cit.: s. 75.

THE DIFFERENCE PRESENT IN THE JEWISH-GENTILE DICHOTOMY

A system of values is a fundamental element for the existence of a group. It is the strongest element of identification and also an important model for individual identity. The existence of a cultural group is where language is a special attribute in stressing the specifications of the difference between "us" and "them". The best examples for Jews are gentiles. It is worth beginning with the term "Jew" which, historically, was not explicit. It was defined variously. Originally, it meant that which Jews, themselves, understood when comprehending their own identity (mainly of a religious character) and which, at the same time, precisely determined relationships with non-Jews. Until the time of the French Revolution, Jewish communities, based on religious purity, existed as closed-communities[89]. The relaxing of internal Jewish community bonds was an historical moment in the emergence of modern states, initiated due to revolutionary transformations in many European countries (not only France). As the rights of Jews within their own communities were radically limited – we are talking here about rabbinical, classical (i.e. traditional) Judaism, which favoured the idea which, inspired by the ideas of Plato, K.R.Popper called a "closed society"[90], the gaining of civil rights and self-awareness by the populations of European states also resulted in the freeing of Jews from the absolute power of their own communities. That authority took in provisions relating to every aspect of Jewish life – from religious to educational and everyday issues. Although, classical Judaism, treated as a stage in the history of Jewish people, ended with the entry of European countries into a new era, it survived as an ideology in two forms: religious orthodoxy and Zionism[91]. But Jews in the modern world also formed an aspect of other cultures with whom they co-ecisted in an open society. In this sense, we kind of have two meanings to the notion of "Jew". In the context of cultural and social isolation, as well as in the mechanisms supporting that isolation, the first meaning of the term "Jew" is obviously more representative. This variant corresponds, in some respects, also idealistically to the constitution of the State of Israel[92]. Since the original purpose for the existence of the state was the return of the Jews to their own land on the basis of the 1950 Right of Return, a key issue was the definition of a Jew. This issue well illustrated the difference that exists between belonging and identification. So, in modern European countries, as Paul Johnson writes, anti-Semites defined Jews as "Everyone, about whom it is said that he is a Jew, is a Jew"[93]. For Jews, however, an essential element to membership of the Jewish community was a subjective feeling of connection with Jewish people, and its crucial element, in accordance

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[89] I. Szahak, *Żydowskie dzieje i religia. Żydzi i goje – XXX wieków historii*, Fijor Publishing, Warszawa-Chicago 1997, s. 27.

[90] Ibid., s. 25.

[91] Ibid., s. 25.

[92] P. Johnson, *Historia Żydów...*, op. cit.: s. 534.

[93] Ibid., s. 534; są to słowa Karla Luegera (1844-1910), wiedeńskiego prawnika i polityka, reprezentował postawę prawicową, antysemickie hasła stanowiły ważny element jego poglądów i rządów na stanowisku burmistrza Wiednia.

with *halacha* (Jewish law), was supposed to be religion. Due to the religious aspect being so important in describing Jewish identity, "attempts at working out a purely secular definition of a Jew" ended in fiasco[94]. Despite this, the law accepted, as a secular act, a broader, non-*halachic* meaning for the term "Jew" and at least in practice, writes Johnson, the issue of definition did not exist, utilising the notion of "Jew" to describe "people born of a Jewish mother or converting to Judaism and not being a believer in another religion", besides which was the original definition of the term *olim* to describe "Jews emigrating to Israel with the aim of settling there"[95].

Within the scope of what determines the limits of Jewish identity was a term emphasising the "us" and "them" dichotomy. That was the notion of the "goy" (gentile). Perhaps no other nationality had conferred upon it such a gap as was assigned to people outside the Jewish community. This notion is not unambiguous. Originating from Hebrew, the word "goy" means "people/nation" and, even though in the Bible it appears with precisely this meaning, it has over time, however, become a term to describe non-Jews. People who helped out Jews with work which was forbidden on the Sabbath, in order not to break religious law and desecrate the Sabbath period, were referred to as "goyim". It is the broadest definition of a non Jew, a Christian[96]. It is the same method of defining and, at the same time stereotyping, the social world from the Jewish side and, in turn, was created regarding the Jews. Jewish social categorisation, dividing citizens into "us" and "goyim" is, at the same time, a specific hierarchy which has two faces. From the perspective of the overall community, the "goy" occupied a higher position but, from the Jewish perspective, the "goy" was a lesser being, condemned rather to mockery and distrust than to hostility or enmity. Hertz admits that there was "anti-goyism" (a neologism being the equivalent of anti-Semitism), but also draws attention to the fact that, as a distinct attitude within Jewish circles, it was rather linked with the emancipation of Jews and appeared quite late, at the end of the 19th or early 20th Centuries.[97]. It should also be added that the relations between Jews and goyim were the result of social feedback, i.e. the negative definition of Jews and their caste isolation were the result of threats perceived from their side. Meanwhile, dislike by Jews towards goyim was "exclusively a defence mechanism against the consequences of living within a caste framework"[98]. Difference does not automatically mean antagonism. It is rather an expression of separateness. The negative meaning of "other" is intensified by dogmatism within the "us" circle in which there is no place for taking into account the values of a group or people considered as "other". Hertz drew excellent attention to this subject, recognising that the concepts of "us" and "them" are rather historical categories[99]. They are not constants,

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[94] Ibid., s. 534.
[95] Ibid., s. 534.
[96] A. Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze...*, op. cit.: s. 113.
[97] Ibid., s. 114.
[98] Ibid., s. 114.
[99] Ibid., s. 81.

but subjective variables, subject to rationalisation under the influence of various factors – personal, social, political, economic, etc. The aforementioned dogmatism refers here to the mechanism which it is possible to describe as a radicalisation of views. This can lead to hermetically sealing a group to influences and to ideological evolution. It is a phenomenon described by Irving Janis, linking it to the group thought syndrome. According to Janis, when a group experiences difficult circumstances (defeats, stresses – cultural, social), a tendency towards maintaining group unity and unanimity appears, supporting group closeness but also a lack of criticism, a conviction is developed about the unconditional and absolute correctness of one's reasoning and values[100]. One could give some thought to whether the influence of this mechanism was not present, at least in part, in the development of contemporary Hasidism. The Cossack uprisings, which occurred at the turn of the 18th Century throughout the eastern areas of Poland, led to poverty and suffering for the people. There was a need, not only for economic and political stability, but perhaps, above all, support for faith and hope for a better life. For the Jewish community, in such an atmosphere, orthodoxy and rabbinical rigidity was not as supportive as were mysticism and messianic ideas. On this basis, Hasidism developed as a departure from orthodoxy towards ecstatic, affirmation and joyous practices aimed at unity with G-d. Originally regarded as heretical and fought against by rabbinic centres, Hasidism finally created itself into an extreme form of Jewish orthodoxy.

SUMMARY

Categorisation and definition of reality as a mechanism which divides into "us" (*ingroup*) and "them" (*outgroup*), are historical truths that Hertz calls "the wisdom of nations" which describe all interpersonal relationships[101]. It is a type of knowledge acquired through the process of history, the result of comparing contantly repeated experiences through many generations. This knowledge is the very reality of man and is appropriately justified in all geographic locations. The contents of this knowledge are connected with identity: of the group, the individual within the group, the individual within the group as opposed to others, and also the individual within him/herself. Since, until now, there has been discussion, above all, on the subject of identity in the group context, it is worth giving some thought to the issue of one's attitude towards oneself. This relates to self-awareness and the ability to answer the question, "Who am I?" An important issue connected to this question is the criterion which allows us to state which of the given replies are adequate. Posing the next question, "Is the emperor naked?", leads us to three issues: Who is the emperor? How does the emperor see himself? How do others see him? "The emperor's new clothes"[102] are metaphors not only for an inappropriate person being in an inappropriate position, but also for the thoughtless subordination of the common man who pretends to see that which can not

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[100] K. Skarżyńska (red.), *Podstawy psychologii politycznej...*, op. cit.
[101] A. Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze...*, op. cit.: s. 103.
[102] Jedna z baśni Hansa Christiana Andersena (1805 – 1875), powstała w 1837 roku.

be seen – something which the emperor himself is pretending. It is possible to acknowledge that it is also alluding to difference as exists between "Who am I?" (as an internal, coherent image of oneself) and "How do I look?" (as external features which are seen by others). Is the emperor the emperor because he has underlings, the insignia of authority or for other reasons? Maria Jarymowicz, in dealing with the issues of individual and social identity, recognises that an individual's identity is comprised of an appropriate appearance, behaviour and psyche which also allow others to differentiate that person, but are also linked to the individual history of that person's life and its experiences[103] – and so it is a wide perspective concerning both self-awareness and external characteristics. However, Jarymowicz draws attention to the fact that, despite a lack of self-awareness of his/her identity, the subject still has an identity due to it being recognised by others. So, here, there is a differentiation between the subject's identity linked to his/her self-awareness and the subject's identity with respect to his/her surroundings. As stated in the introduction, identity, even etymologically, means "being the same", also establishing difference, the noticing of resemblances and differences, and the me-you and me-us relationships. Defining oneself is always done against a background, since identity is that, next to understanding one's own internal world, which is, in great part, recognising oneself amongst others – going from Me to Us. A strong need within an individual is the seeking of the specific Me when lacking a reply to, or having uncertainty with, the question, "Who am I?" That is the motivation. It is a reply to cognitive curiosity, counteracting a feeling of disorientation, of anxiety within a situation of cognitive uncertainty. However, attention should be drawn to the fact that re-asserting oneself (recognition) is a cognitive process and will generally depend on many factors capable of disrupting or distorting perception. Therefore, I and We, as well as the Me-Us relationship, are susceptible to being deformed[104]. The illusory nature of the emperor's clothes and his nudity are what are lost in the process of recognition.

Synopsis

THE PSYCHO-POLITICAL DIFFERENTIATION OF THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY – WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Identity is a complex concept because it relates to both the psychological mechanisms of an individual's functioning, as well as to social, political and cultural conditions. The author, in reflecting on identity, attempts to highlight each of them. Moreover, she presents th

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[103] M. Jarymowicz, *Tożsamość jako efekt rozpoznawania siebie wśród swoich i obcych. Eksperymentalne badania nad procesami różnicowania Ja-My-Inni*, w: P. Boski, M. Jarymowicz, H. Malewska-Peyre (red.), *Tożsamość a odmienność...*, op. cit.: s. 215.
[104] Ibid., s. 220-221.

problem of defining identity with regard to, not only social psychology, the psychology of politics and the psychology of personality, but also with the specific approach of the psychology of culture. An essential part of these considerations is demonstrating identity problems based not only on the functioning of an individual, but also of a group, including not only the individual (personality), but also collective factors. Group identity appears here with, among others, such terms as: identification and affiliation (e.g. ethnic groups, religious groups, or nationality), affinity on the basis of traditional communities and as "socially imagined" relationships. On the other hand, group dentity is dealt with in the context some kinds of mechanisms of group functioning, e.g. conformity and categorisation (which is connected with nationalism or ethno-centrism). The issue of identity, referring to groups, is also presented with regard to specific cultural examples, including the phenomenon of social stratification. A good example of eastern religious and social stratification is society in India, and for the West, excellent examples are the widely written-about specifics characterizing the religious and social organisation of the Jewish community and its typical forms, e.g. the ghetto, caste, diaspora.