

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES IN THE SIXTH WAVE (2010-2060) CULTURE

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Abstract: *Identities are at the beginning of the 21st century, in one way or another, related to almost all cultural, religious and ethnic tensions and conflicts within and between national states. Why identities have become important? In this article I'm looking for answers to the following questions: What is happening to identities? What alternative strategies and options to constructing identities do people have? How do they change people's orientation towards "the others" and the future? In my article, I study what challenges current identities pose to education, research and the economy in the Sixth Wave social, economic and cultural change. I suggest strengthening hybrid identity and social pedagogical orientation to face the future.*

Key words: *Identity, Kondratieff cycles, fundamentalism, hybridism, social pedagogy.*

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century ethnic, religious and cultural tensions and conflicts between people and between groups, within and between states, have increased. Tensions and conflicts are related in many ways to identities and the construction of identities.

In this article, I'm looking for answers to the questions: What is happening to identities? How do they change the way people orientate towards the others and the future? What options are there when it comes to orienting towards the future? What challenges do especially education and research face 2010-2060?

My article is mainly based on Stuart Hall's (1932-2014) research on identity and cultural change, as well as my own articles and essays on identities, social pedagogy, social, economic, cultural and political change.

2. The Scene for Constructing Identities in the Sixth Wave World

How does the scene, where we live at the beginning of the 21th century look like? At first glance, it seems that everything - work, economy, social, cultural and political

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aspects are in a state of rapid change. Everything experienced safely, on the basis of which people have built their identities and felt themselves necessary and meaningful, is in motion. It seems that in the ongoing time people are living like in the gap between history and future. The familiar era is coming to an end while the new one is not yet clearly visible. Cultures are characterized by a shift from modern to post-modern, from capitalism to post-capitalism and from national states to global (e.g. Bauman, 2000; Gibson-Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron & Healy, 2013).

The ongoing change can be thought of as change of the “Big Story”. As in the past, the driving force behind change is scientific and technological innovations, which enable a new way of producing goods and services. It is now possible to think that the Big Story of the industrial-capitalist era is about to recede, and the new Big Story is about to replace the old with automation, robotics, nanotechnology and digital innovations. It is possible to understand change as a major turning point in world history. Change challenges, and also forces, ordinary people as well as those in education, research, politics and economics to give up their old ways of thinking and acting. (Korten, 2006; Kuosmanen, 2017a, pp. 81-92; Wilenius, 2017, 2015).

Another credible answer why people feel like living in the gap or somewhere in between comes from economic and cultural research. Studies indicate that social and cultural change is cyclical. Russian economist Nikolai Kondratieff (1892-1938) found out in his research that in the industrial-capitalist era economic and social development occurs in cycles of 40-60 years. Crises are followed by economic and social prosperity. The cycles of change are driven by innovations such as steam, steel, electricity and petrochemicals. (Kondratieff 1984). Now we are moving from the 5th cycle to the 6th cycle. This means a shift from the cycle of information technology (1970-2010) to the cycle of smart technology (2010-2060) (Wilenius 2017; Wilenius, 2015, p. 56).

The Big Story is changing and the 6th wave changes all. The old way of organizing and reforming society from top to bottom turns to organizing and renewing society and culture from the people and the needs of the people. The 6th wave gives room for people to be active, collaborative and work together. It will bring together people with the desire to share and do well, those who recognize and know partnerships, social and global responsibility within internal entrepreneurship. It challenges collaboration-based companies to provide services needed in society. The Old World is turning around with the 6th wave of economic, cultural and social change. (Kuosmanen, 2017a, pp. 81-92; Wilenius, 2015, p. 56; Wilenius 2017).

Cyclicity can also be observed in the change of values. I studied the change in the values of Finnish society over its 100-year history. I found that in the change of society the idea of an exclusive society is followed by the idea of an inclusive society. (Figure 1; Kuosmanen, 2017a, pp. 84-86). The culture that will soon enter into the 2020s, at least in Finland, is slowly moving from the values of an exclusive – neoliberal and nationalist - to the values of an inclusive society. Similar weak signals of a shift in the cultural cycle, a move towards more solidarity and communal values and an idea of inclusive society/world, can also be seen elsewhere in Europe, Latin America and the United States.

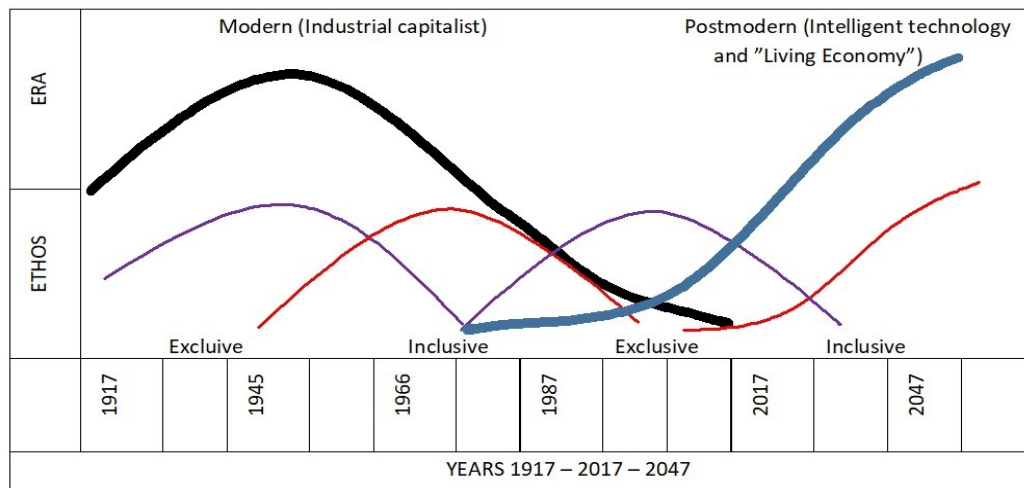


Fig. 1. *Change of era and ethos in Finland from 1917 to 2047* (Kuosmanen, 2017a, p. 85).

We are at the beginning of a new era. A new cycle will come anyway. It has been delayed by many political, religious and ethnic interests and passions. All of these are about power. History gives us lot of evidence to that: those who rule and are in power in society always try to occupy people's minds so that they can be treated as if they were a dead body.

What is delaying, even trying to prevent, the reinforcement of the new cycle of change? Here are some observations of forces that are obviously working against the ideas of building a new culture and society. In western countries, conservative values have strengthened and also support for the extreme right has increased in elections. Fanatics and populists, such as Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and US President Donald J. Trump, have gotten much support in the elections. Support of them is based on defending the old order and opposing emerging ideas. One of Bolsonaro's projects is to eradicate critical education from Brazil. In particular, the pedagogy of liberation by Paulo Freire is targeted (Suoranta, 2019, p. 166). US President Donald J. Trump has declared war on the alien threat to the original American values and lifestyles.

In addition to all this, there are global declared and unannounced wars, such as the war between global capitalism and local economies and the war between the Christian and the Islamic world. Global capitalism is conquering new territorial areas all over the world for the use of market, and invades new areas in territories it has already conquered, such as the public health and social services previously provided by municipalities in Welfare countries. The ideology of global capitalism, neoliberalism, has taken on a hegemonic position almost everywhere in the world. It divides people into useful and useless, exploitable and not now or no longer exploitable, as well as successful and non-successful people. All that provokes fear and hate, and in many cases it is perceived as a threat to the "original" cultures. In addition to occupations and conquests, the way people are treated, provokes fear and anger in people. Many times, fear and anger are directed at innocent people, such as refugees. Fear and anger activate the struggle for defend region and culture experienced their own. At its most

extreme, hatred manifests itself as terrorism against invaders.

In this situation a large number of people do not know how to face the future. It is understandable that at this time people thinking about their identities can be very unsure and confused. Next, I'm looking at what alternatives are available for constructing identities for people who are like as if standing between two eras.

3. Options for Constructing Identities

When constructing identity, the human being is searching for an answer to the following questions: Who I am? Who I am not? Where do I belong to? Where do I not belong to? In constructing identity people have to decide what to include and what to exclude from their identities? Table 1 illustrates differences between the options of constructing identities in the beginning of 6th wave culture.

Ideal types of identities

Table 1

Criterion	Ideal types of constructing identities (ID's)			
	Traditional	Modern	Postmodern	Market
Condition	Community: Religious or ethnic	National State	Global village	Global Market
Culture, ID and social	Falls together	Falls apart	On the state of becoming	Falls together
Re-production of ID's	Believing in Myths of Religion or Tribe	Believing in Myths of Nation	Living in trans-cultural World	Consuming products on the Market
Method of constructing ID's	Include the tradition, exclude the strange	Include the national exclude the others	Try to include (with disturbance from the outside)	Open mind for shopping on the Market
Idea of Power	Continuity of Beliefs and Myths	Continuity of Nation by colonizing minds	Liberate (yourselves)	Colonize mind and choices
Who am I?	I'm a member of a parish or tribe	I'm a Finn	I'm a global citizen	I'm a consumer
Metaphor	Brother and sister	Pilgrim	Vagabond or tourist	Jolly Robot

There are four options to give an answer to the questions set: Traditional, modern, postmodern and market based - neo-liberal and global-capitalism (Hall, 1992, pp. 274-316; Hall, 1997a, pp. 173-187; Hall, 1997b; Hall, 1999; Hall, 2016; Hall, 2017; Hall, 2019). The first option means that people turn their eyes and minds backward searching for identities far from history, from religions and from the tradition of tribes and their ways of life. The idea of that choice is the re-production of the myths of the religions, tribes and their beliefs, rituals and communities. The second option means looking back to the national states, the myths of the origin of the nation and the traditions of it. The idea is the re-production of the spirit of the national state. The third choice is postmodern, which means that all identities are mixtures of cultures and they are all the time in a process of transformation, as a process of becoming. Anthony Giddens describes this choice as a moving celebration (Giddens, 1999). The fourth option is the market choice. Its idea is to strengthen the identity of (global) consumer citizenship. In that mission, global capitalism is striving for destroying all social, cultural, and local boundaries, and all human bonds of friendship, affection and love. (Bauman, 2000, p. 23; Hall, Critcher, Jeffersson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978; Harvey, 2005; Kuosmanen, 2005).

All of the illustrated options for constructing identities are real in this world. And they work in people's minds and influence tensions between people and groups inside and between nations.

Much attention has not been paid in the discussions to the identity market. On the market, people identify themselves by consumption. Identity markets are present everywhere in society, also in politics. When operating on the market, parties want to sell their product. The key to selling a political product is to provide people with opportunities for identification of the ideology and party. Neoliberal and right-wing populist along with the right-wing around the world have been very clever at selling their product and hiding their political aspirations behind the 'honey' speech. In recent years both products have sold well on the identity market. (Kuosmanen, 2005, pp. 107-124).

The identity market has never really asked, what you really want or how you could make your life meaningful and useful to other people. On the market, people are treated as consumers. The market offers artificial and fake identities, sometimes a moment of happiness until you have to run after a new product. Constructing identities on the markets provokes instability, not only in people's lives, but in society as a whole (Kuosmanen, 2005, pp. 107-124).

If we look at those identity builders, traditionalists are like sisters and brothers who perform rituals in their own parishes. Modernists are like pilgrims on their way to the Promised Land. Postmodernists are like tourists or vagabonds passing through multicultural communities, where they get always something necessary to be attached to their identities (Bauman, 1996). Those looking for their identity on the marketplace, are like jolly robots (Marcuse, 1964) who are not interested in their genuine needs or in giving themselves the best for the common good. If people were rational in the multicultural and globalized world, they would choose the way of the tourist or the tramp in constructing their identities. But...

4. Strategies to Face the Future

But ... Tensions and instability on the political and cultural scene disturb the constructors of identities. Which strategy would I choose in a world where: 1. Conservative values have gotten more support and provoked religious fanaticism in their supporters. 2. Populist movements have been successful in the elections. With them, fascists and Nazis have openly entered the political scene. 3. Global capitalism is causing unrest and tension in the areas it has conquered. The wars associated with the expansion of global capitalism provoke counter-violence and terrorism. 4. The movements against capitalism have also strengthened. This is reflected in the movements such as Occupy Wallstreet and more recently in the global climate change movement. These movements have challenged the power of capitalism. The destructive effects of capitalism on people, nature and culture have challenged people to take a critical view of it and to direct their thoughts to the post-capitalist era (E.g. Klein, 2019, 2015).

This review has presented four options for constructing identities in the gap between the old and the new era. Are there four options to face the future? Many people have Janus faces on this subject these days. They have a desire to join the universal, but are stuck in the particular. The temptation is to look at the global, to start building a world citizen's identity, but turn the gaze and thoughts to the familiar and the safe, and begin to build identities based on ethnic, religious, and national myths. (Hall, 1992, pp. 274-316; Hall, 1999; Nairn, 1997; Wallerstein, 1984, pp. 166-167).

In a world with political, economic, cultural and ethnic tensions, the constructors of identities and communities have two possible strategies to face the future: fundamentalist and hybrid. Fundamentalism has two forms. The first focuses on religion, ethnic or national, at a time and space that never existed. The second focuses on the construction of identities by markets. People, who choose the first fundamentalist choice, strive to set boundaries against everything unknown and perceived as foreign. The second form of fundamentalism, on the contrary, contributes to the eradication of cultural, religious, social and political borders throughout the world (Hall, 1992, pp. 274-316; Hall, 2019, pp. 49-105).

Another strategy for the future is the hybrid strategy. Those who choose it realize that generations that preceded them lived in the diaspora. They know that they will live in the diaspora, there is no return to the original home, because there has never been such a home. They understand that cultures are changing and mingling all the time, and that their identities are being constructed as ever-changing mixtures of local, national and global. (Hall, 1992, pp. 274-316; Hall, 2019, pp. 49-105).

There are two strategies to face the future and its challenges. Choosing the fundamentalist way of constructing identities, reinforces totalitarian and barbaric cultures. Choosing a hybrid identity means choosing "joy, hope and freedom", an option in which there is no need to believe in myths and in which the the worry about strangers have never existed. In the irrational world, starting to construct hybrid identity would be a rational and wise choice.

5. Challenges to Education, Research and Business

Education prepares children, young people and adults to face the future and its challenges. What are the challenges for education as well as for research and the economy arising from this review? The first challenge is how to face the tension between the aspirations of power and human freedom. The second challenge is how to prevent a barbaric, exclusionary culture based on fundamentalism being reinforced throughout nations and the world. The questions are: How to help children, young people and adults enforce their reflexive skills? How to help people liberate themselves from myths and from magical consciousness? How to learn a critical consciousness? How to encourage people to make choices and take responsibility of their choices? How to help people take their lives into their own hands?

As a solution, I suggest strengthening social pedagogical thinking and action in education and training from families to higher education. The idea of social pedagogy is to strengthen the dialogue between people and the critical awareness that helps people and groups of people stay away from the occupiers of thinking and action around the world. Figure 2 illustrates the ideas of social pedagogy.

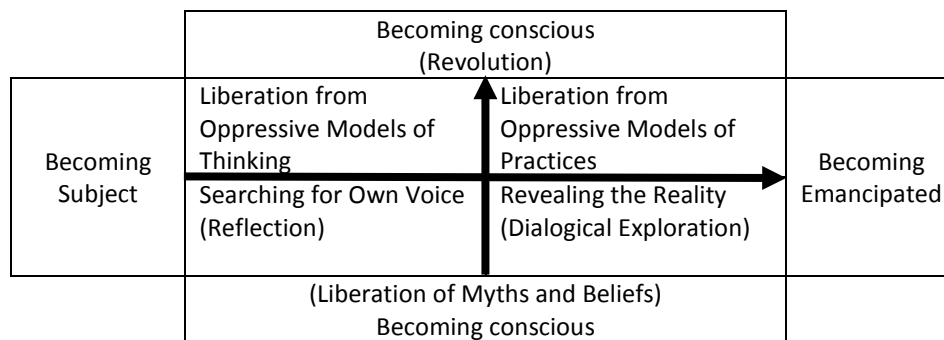


Fig. 2. *Social pedagogical way of thinking and acting* (e.g. Kuosmanen 2019, p. 61).

At the centre of social pedagogical education and work is liberation of human beings from the conditions and power that undermine or prevent human growth and development. The liberation and the associated change in thinking and acting are always processes. The processes of becoming a subject, having control of life, becoming aware, becoming aware of the factors influencing life, and liberating from harmful addictions, relations and guardianship, are at the core of social pedagogical activity. In all of these processes, dialogic and reflective action is the key to opening the gates to human growth, development and learning. (Kuosmanen, 2015, pp. 165-178; Kuosmanen, 2018, pp. 95-104; Nivala & Ryyänen 2019).

Social pedagogical thinking and action can be applied to any activity aimed at strengthening people's critical thinking and critical social capacity. For research, I suggest producing critical information on economic, social, cultural and political change. Research, as well as teaching, plays a key role in liberating people from the oppressive structures and practices of society. Strengthening the participatory and emancipatory

approach, involving people in the production and analysis of knowledge will help in this regard. Figure 3 illustrates that.

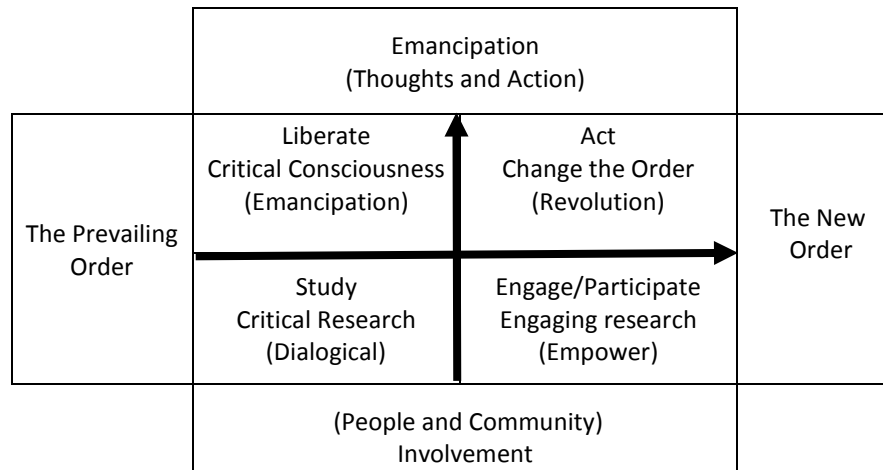


Fig. 3. *Involvement and emancipation in research* (Kuusmanen 2019, p. 62).

The 6th wave of economic, social and cultural change is revolutionizing the way of thinking and acting around the Old World. Old values and structures have gradually been replaced by new values and flexible structures. A strengthening 6th cycle favours ethical and human values. Societies are beginning to build from the bottom to up. This is already reflected e.g. in the fact that the most important factor in the growth of employment is self-employment and co-employment with people who share the same values and interests. A culture is emerging where people take control of their lives - their daily lives, their jobs, their leisure time and their political activity. Now is it worth considering how education and research could, in addition to bringing up critical thinking and knowledge, contribute to the consolidation of society in which people themselves take control of work, economy, culture and politics? (Kuusmanen, 2017; Wilenius, 2017, 2015).

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