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QUALITY AND CIVIC IDENTITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT - MONTENEGRIN EXPERIENCES

Abstract: *In this time, research on civic identity is especially relevant as important characteristics of society, the environment and people. The paper analyzes the essence of the concept and the primary sources of identity of a modern man. The identity issues of Montenegrin society were especially discussed. A questionnaire in Table 2 was proposed in order to determine the state of civic identity in Montenegro with a comparison of the time before and after the independence. Naturally, in the spirit of Deming's approach, the questionnaire in Table 2 was defined to determine measures to improve identity. This questionnaire largely draws on possible improvements highlighted through a wide range of international quality standards. Thus, an attempt is made to analyze the civic identity issue in the light of the synergy of different quality standards. Simply put, the paper especially points out the importance of an integrated approach to quality in the function of strengthening the civic identity of the environment.*

Keywords: *Identity; Quality System; Civic Identity; Questionnaire.*

1. Initial consideration

1.1. About identity

The contemporary issue of identity may need to begin with the question: What is identity today? It depends from which angle we look, whether it is "name and surname, affiliation to certain communities and ethnic groups" or it is something that we may not need and should not be in doubt about. Thus, we can sense that today's identity is subject to change because of the rapidity of technological progress that affects the value system of a modern man. In this way, technology deprives the person of one of the two citizenships they have acquired. The second relates to the fact that man is a "citizen of the world of things", and the first, almost lost

citizenship, makes man a "citizen of the world of values". The thing is, "values will stay when things are spent" (Šušnjić, 2014). Therefore, the possibility that technology can run in parallel with cultural identity without disrupting the value system is crucial. An example is Japan, which Đuro Šušnjić calls - "actor of technology". This eastern country, with the actualization of technology, has managed to survive as acceptable for the rest of the world, and still preserve its "local culture and national identity". Sometimes it is not wise to fully adopt what a superior nation provides you as good and useful, but it is very often necessary to modify it, in order to fit it into your value system. Japan has shown us that by reducing technology to a "mere means of achieving goals" (Šušnjić, 2014).

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1.2. Inevitability and identity determination

The very topicality of this concept and the great need to know its essence in the world today classifies it among those concepts that are characterized by two features: on the one hand, it is inevitable, but on the other hand, vague. The descriptions of Erik Homburger Erikson, one of the leading theorists of identity in the 20th century, also contribute to this. He calls it "all-pervading, dissipate and unfathomable" (Erikson, 1968). It can be said that identity is simply a matter of human nature. As Carmela Libkind observes, he is like a sin - no matter how much you oppose him, you cannot escape him (Liebkind, 1984).

Since identity is inevitable, it is important to attempt to access its closer definition. Theorists have listed different answers and opinions, but all these statements touch on one central point. First, identity is "an individual or group sense of self" (Jepperson et al., 1996). In the book "Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics" the authors state that identity is formed as a product of self-awareness, where "I" or "we" (depending on whether it is an individual or collective identity) we possess certain qualities that make up a set of something different from "you" or "them". Theorists often cite the name, gender, citizenship, etc. as elements of identity that a newborn receives at birth. However, in environments like ours, name and citizenship are a variable category, as women in most cases change their last name in marriage, and citizenship today can generally be easily changed. There is also the possibility of dual citizenship, which is part of the established laws of some states. However, if identity is a product of our self-awareness, then this statement has no basis due to the vagueness of its time frame. This means that the aforementioned elements become part of the identity when the baby becomes aware of them and when it assigns itself to them. Identity, according to many theorists, "refers to the ideas that an actor has about his

individuality and peculiarity (self), which are formed (and change over time) in relations with others" (Jepperson et al., 1996).

1.3. Sources of identity

If we were to try to find its sources in identity, it would be like trying to catch the sun's rays. However, in this case, the authors single out those that seem primary in the already existing practice. One of them is the "ascriptive" source of human identity that relates to the following characteristics of the individual: "age, sex, kinship (blood kinship), ethnicity (defined as extended kinship) and race" (Huntington, 2008). Then, "territoriality" is a source whose context carries a lot of meanings: "neighborhood, village, place, city, province, state, country, geographical area, continent, hemisphere" (Huntington, 2008).

Before considering other primary sources of human identity, we will turn to one important observation. Namely, in the first three sources, Huntington enumerated what was given to man by nature, then the cultural aspect of his immediate environment, and then he framed the settlements of such "ascriptive" and "cultural" personalities. However, if territoriality were to take precedence over culture (the third and second sources of place-swapping), we could assume what cultural characteristics we might expect from such a social community. For example, it is inevitable that a group of people in a metropolis will be technologically much more developed than people living in a village. Therefore, people in the countryside will have less risk of disturbing their cultural content, and it will be more visible and more pronounced in the rural environment compared to the urban community - which has influenced its culture with technological aggression.

On the other hand, there is a very strong argument in favor of the already established structure of the source of identity. Cultural identity may take precedence over territorial,

because a particular nation does not have to have its own territorial framework that it legitimately possesses, and it may have a culture that is strongly present and recognizable in the world. We can cite the example of Jews who are inhabited in large numbers all over the world and, except in their home country of Israel and have a strong presence and strong cultural and religious influence in many countries around the world. However, the well-known Jewish religion and culture did not allow them to collapse, but for generations based their adaptation on the strong preservation of their identity in other states where Jews settled. We see that it is possible to recognize culture on the basis of territory, but culture can be dominant even without territorial definition.

The previous digression did not aim to in any way cast a shadow of negative criticism on the author's attitude or to answer questions about the basic sources of human identity. Its appearance is conditioned by a modest reflection on the author's statement and the eventual opening of a new chapter for discussion, in order to better understand and more precisely define the central question of identity.

The fourth source of human identity is "political". It includes "factions, cliques, leaders, interest groups, movements, parties, ideologies and the state" (Huntington, 2008). After that, the author refers to the "economic" source, as the fifth in a row. Of course, this is about "work, position, profession, working group, employer, industry, economic sector, trade union and class" (Huntington, 2008).

Finally, we came to the last, "social" source, which contains the following elements in its content: "friends, club, team, colleagues, leisure group, status" (Huntington, 2008). Huntington has very thoughtfully and precisely listed what he considers most important for the identity status of an individual. Questions about the order remained open, but not in the sense of the impossibility of answering them. The opinion is presented through a couple of digressions,

which does not mean that it is true – that is why it is open for further controversy and discussion. We must agree with the author that each individual will be included in at least some of these groups, but not all necessarily have to be the source of his identity. There is also intensity as one of the most important factors influencing the selection of these sources. Thus, the significance of identity varies depending on the interactions between individuals, groups, and the environment in which they move and reside (Huntington, 2008).

1.4. About Montenegrin identity

Authors often use the symbolism of storeys in terms of identity in order to set a certain internal structure. But, let's look at the issue of identity on three levels: local, regional and global. In this case, we would single out the language from the identity corpus, which Vuk Karadzic would define as one of the three holiest things of the people. The remaining two, according to his opinion, are faith and customs. Summarizing these three things, Karadzic says: "... these peoples are related to each other and differ from each other. As the people lost those three shrines, they lost their name" (Vukmanović, 1964). When it comes to language on a global scale, English certainly stands as an answer to the identity question. If we look for some local example, we will see that the dominant language in our region is that by which we can all communicate. Of course, there are different variations about which, as a rule, only linguists can provide expert interpretations. So, to talk about regional identity when it comes to language, it would definitely be what we call Montenegrin, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Macedonian languages. It seems important that, like the world with English, we can understand each other and communicate freely with all these languages. Unfortunately, looking back at regional happenings over the past few decades, it seems easier for the world to build a global identity when it comes to language than for

our region to establish its linguistic identity that would finally acquire what these areas have always lacked - continuity. In the end, the local level would logically refer to each of these languages individually, linking them territorially to the climate where they are most represented and culturally dominant.

Montenegro, as a country that has entered democratic waters from a socialist society, has been in a period of transition for several decades. As a country that does not have a democratic tradition and as a country that may live in the illusion that it is a democratic society, it has not yet liberated itself and the question is whether it will get rid of some old habits and customs. Some authors are of the opinion that we have not yet got rid of all the elements characteristic of the tribal community (Turquin Spičanović, 2006). But the difficult history of our ancestors did not provide an opportunity for Montenegrin society to begin to mature earlier and gain greater importance and influence on the world stage. The Balkans and Montenegro were countries of passage and division. Among the most important are: the division of the Roman Empire into East and West; then there was the line of demarcation between Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empire, and finally, the division of the Eastern and Western blocs in that territory (Turquin Spičanović, 2006). Montenegro, positioned between two "huge magnets" (Turquin Spičanović, 2006) - the East and the West, has often found itself in a situation where its spirituality and culture are being crucified. This has led to an eternal search for balance, as well as a lack of continuity in institution building. Despite all the external obstructions that unfortunately had continuity, Montenegrin society has achieved its uniqueness in certain segments, which is also an integral part of its identity. By this we mean two things: Montenegrin geography and its content and customs characteristic of the Montenegrin climate (does not mean that the roots of these customs are Montenegrin, but they have been adopted and present for generations).

Montenegrin geography may need to begin with the mention of Lovcen, as something that throughout history has been a symbol of this country's freedom and independence. According to numerous authors, one of the two most important personalities in Montenegro is buried there. Another element of the geographical identity of this country is the descent from Cetinje to the Bay of Kotor, which is characterized by views of natural fjords. There is also the coastal part of the Adriatic Sea which, starting from Ada Bojana through Saint Stefan and Kotor - a world heritage city, ends with Herceg Novi, Risan and its Roman mosaics (Turquin Spičanović, 2006). Then there is the rich Zeta plain from which, by a railway that runs like a snake among the rugged and rocky mountain peaks connecting Montenegro with Serbia, we come across the natural beauties of the Montenegrin northern idyll (Turquin Spičanović, 2006). Then it is good to mention Perućica, the only rainforest in Europe. Pearls of Montenegro are also its canyons: Tara, Komarnica, Piva, Morača, Mrtvice and Sušice (Montenegro.travel, 2021). The previous enumeration did not aim to cover the complete geographical miles of the Montenegrin climate, but rather served as an inspiration and justification for one statement. It is about the fact that Montenegro is a country of contrasts, and through its geographical position, they wanted to notice the directions that throughout history were the paths of invasion, and the paths of civilization (Turquin Spičanović, 2006).

Customs during weddings and funerals are a strong reflection of the cultural basis of a society, its traditions, and at the same time its identity. Tradition, as a corpus of past and present, is the basis for the future and it provides a time continuity of generationally verified values that have accumulated in a particular society. Under the influence of tradition, Montenegrins found it difficult to change and adapt slowly, which from a positive point of view enabled them not to break with the old by accepting new things, so the content was enriched, not alternated

(Turquin Spičanović, 2006). Thus, weddings as well as the birth of a male child were celebrated through the echoes of shooting from various weapons. Folk dances, or folklore, were more reminiscent of high jumps than the concept of established steps. Black, as a sign of mourning for the deceased, is the dominant color in Montenegro. Another characteristic of the funeral is the wailing during the ceremony, during which the virtues of the deceased are emphasized and glorified (Turquin Spičanović, 2006). Montenegrins are specific in their relationship with women, which can be interpreted in different ways. They like to dominate and make decisions. However, according to neuropsychiatrist Borislav Mitrić, the decision in Montenegro is made by women. He also believes that it is much harder for a Montenegrin to lose his mother than to lose his father. Because, when he loses his father, "he matures quickly, grows up quickly, becomes a man quickly". And when he loses his mother, "he gets old quickly" (Turquin Spičanović, 2006). In order to reach the most accurate conclusion and form a more objective position based on facts, it is necessary to look at the opinions of other authors. Thus, psychiatrist Todor Baković noted that "the nature of the Montenegrin made him optimistic, and history made him depressed" (Turquin Spičanović, 2006). The course and content of Montenegrin history have influenced that it is no longer depression in the form of a temporary illness, but depression as one of the character traits. In the past, Montenegrins by force of circumstances became poturice (people who converted to Islam during the ottoman conquest of Europe), there were often mutual conflicts; then, there is the severe rift between the Partisans and the Chetniks. And today, all this appears in a certain form in the Parliament, where members of different ideologies often change political parties (Turquin Spičanović, 2006). What we can conclude from the above is that Montenegrins have a dose of ambivalence, strong enough to carry out strong obstruction and destruction within

society. A people who feel love and hate for something at the same time are prone to accentuated oscillations, because love and hate are so close to each other. This impetuosity does not allow for a sufficiently long regeneration of society, but out of great love, sharp anger and even greater hatred quickly appear (Senić, 2021). So, the negative events that took place in Montenegrin history have physically disappeared, but they have left their mark in the Montenegrin man and woman, presenting themselves as a conflict of internal emotions, and impulsive emotions of the same intensity.

2. State of identity of the environment

After the theoretical processing of the concept of identity and the presentation of the Montenegrin identity through two prisms, in the following we will pay more attention to the concretization of our research subject. The aim of this chapter is to determine the state of identity of the Montenegrin environment, and for the method was chosen a questionnaire in Table 2 that will give us certain results based on research. Namely, the proposed questionnaire in Table 2 consists of twenty questions and each question, except the offered answers, requires from the respondents a short explanation why they chose an answer. Respondents answer the same questions in two time intervals: before 2006 and after 2006, ie before and after the independence of Montenegro. The target group filling out the questionnaire in Table 2 represents the cultural elite of Montenegro and based on their opinion, as representatives of Montenegrin society, measurable results would be obtained. The following is a questionnaire in tabular form.

Table 1. Questionnaire: situation of civic identity in Montenegro (before and after 2006)

| |
|---|
| 1. How the majority of the population declared: a) As citizens of Montenegro b) According to the nationality to which they belong by origin |
| 2. Was the religious affiliation mostly expressed in relation to the civil one?: a) Yes b) No |
| 3. Did the citizens mostly prefer: a) Common interests and professional closeness b) Religious and national closeness |
| 4. In your opinion, did the citizens prefer to build?: a) Public buildings (schools, libraries, theaters, cinemas ...) b) Religious objects |
| 5. Did the citizens prefer cooperation with countries: a) Which in cooperation are guided by interest and economic criteria b) Which are mostly of the same religion |
| 6. Did the citizens experience greater closeness with any other country in relation to Montenegro, ie. the country they live in? a) Yes b) Partially c) No |
| 7. Did the citizens have a better opinion about: a) Judicial institutions of Montenegro b) Judicial institutions of the countries of the region |
| 8. Did the citizens have more confidence in: a) Educational institutions of Montenegro b) Educational institutions of the countries of the region |
| 9. Did the citizens have more confidence in: a) Health institutions of Montenegro b) Health institutions of the countries of the region |
| 10. Did the citizens give priority to: a) Domestic food products b) Foreign food products |
| 11. Did the citizens appreciate more: a) Domestic degree from State University b) Diplomas from state universities in the region |
| 12. Did the citizens appreciate more: a) Domestic degree from a private universities b) Diplomas from private universities in the region |
| 13. Did the citizens know the original Montenegrin songs and did they like to sing them? a) Yes b) Partially c) No |
| 14. Did the citizens know the national anthem and did they like to sing it? a) Yes b) Partially c) No |
| 15. During the employment engagement, was the key criterion for employers: a) Professional capability and relationship towards work b) National and religious affiliation |
| 16. Were the citizens more loyal? a) Montenegrin sports clubs b) Sports clubs of another country |
| 17. Were the citizens committed to the national team: a) Yes b) Partially c) No |
| 18. Did the citizens prefer? a) Montenegrin artworks b) Artworks of some other countries |

| |
|---|
| 19. Did citizens have more confidence in: a) Media houses of Montenegro b) Media houses of some other countries |
| 20. Are there any deviations to the previously asked questions depending on the observed region: a) No deviations b) At the level of up to 30% c) At a level above 30% |

3. Identity improvement measures

After determining the state of identity of the Montenegrin environment on the basis of questionnaire in Table 1, we would try to propose certain measures for the improvement of identity on the basis of the new questionnaire. Questionnaire in Table 2 would refer to recording and assessing the importance of measures to improve the identity of the environment. Measures to improve the identity of the environment are

scaled from 1 to 10 so the cultural workers can record and quantify them by importance for Montenegro. What is more important to mention here is that the questions from questionnaire in Table 2 are correlated and the importance of the proposed measure in each question should be observed in relation to the importance of the measures offered in all other questions from this questionnaire. This questionnaire, which is tabulated below, consists of 10 questions where each question, in addition to the answers, requires an explanation.

Table 2. Questionnaire: measures for improvement of civic identity in Montenegro

| |
|--|
| 1. To what extent is the celebration and affirmation of jubilees related to the culture and history of all nations in Montenegro important for strengthening the civic identity of Montenegro: - from 1 to 10 |
| 2. To what extent is the strengthening of communication between various parts of Montenegro and among peoples through culture, art, education and sports important for strengthening the civic identity of Montenegro: - from 1 to 10 |
| 3. To what extent is the balanced economic development of the northern, central and southern part of Montenegro, important for strengthening the civic identity of Montenegro: - from 1 to 10 |
| 4. To what extent is the development of cultural and educational institutions at the state level and by state jurisdiction as opposed to regional ones, important for strengthening the civic identity of Montenegro: - from 1 to 10 |
| 5. To what extent is strengthening the civic concept of institutional development important for strengthening the civic identity of Montenegro: - from 1 to 10 |
| 6. To what extent is emphasizing the commitment to Montenegrin sports national teams in relation to regional teams important for strengthening the civic identity of Montenegro? - from 1 to 10 |
| 7. To what extent are mixed marriages important for strengthening the civic identity of Montenegro? - from 1 to 10 |
| 8. To what extent does the political elite influence the strengthening of the civic identity of Montenegro? - from 1 to 10 |
| 9. To what extent does the strengthening of the economy affect the strengthening of the civic identity of Montenegro? - from 1 to 10 |
| 10. To what extent does the strengthening of IT literacy affect the strengthening of the civic identity of Montenegro? - from 1 to 10 |

4. Standards and identity

Management standards (Figure 1), each in its scope, create the preconditions for the

development of civic identity of the environment as a complex category. Preconditions are created through the synergy of standards (Vukčević et al., 2021).

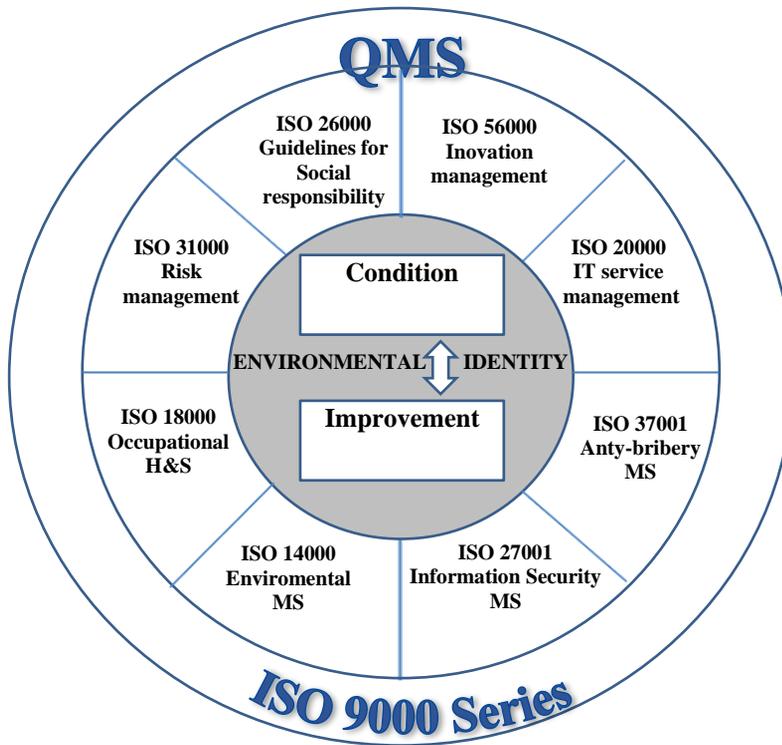


Figure 1. The identity of the environment in the environment of standards

When analyzing the impact of management standards on the creation and improvement of civic identity of the environment, it is noticed that the impact is a large mosaic where each standard with its principles, requirements and suggestions incorporates at least one part, and some even more. Without fragments there is no mosaic, because it would be incomplete and would not have full significance. Such is the case with the civic identity of the environment, which, under the auspices of standards, can be verified and improved.

Thus, for example, the question arises whether there is a shift in the development of civic identity if there are no established standards of quality management in organizations and public administration. This also applies to standards of social

responsibility, IT security, environmental protection, risk management, safety and security at work, as well as all other management standards (Perović et al., 2017).

Thus, the civic identity of the environment is achieved and improved in an environment of standards that are a dynamic category and adapt to ever-changing standards for the improvement of identity. This environment is an important subsystem of the socio-political system as a medium for meeting and improving human needs. The influence of a wide front of standards on the improvement of the civic identity of the environment requires a studious analysis. For this occasion, the emphasis is on a number of particularly influential standards (Figure 1).

5. Concluding remarks

Identity is a very current concept, and the need to know its essence is expressed. It is characterized by two primary features: it is inevitable on the one hand, and unclear on the other. The paper analyzes the essence, definition and sources of the identity of modern man. The focus was on the insufficiently researched issue of Montenegrin civic identity.

After the theoretical analysis, a questionnaire in Table 1 was defined in order to determine the state of civic identity in Montenegro in the periods before and after gaining independence. Also, a questionnaire in Table 2 was proposed with the aim of determining

measures for the improvement of civic identity. Preliminary analyzes show that a very important condition for determining the state of civic identity, as well as the application of measures for its improvement, is the application of quality management standards. These standards are a dynamic category and create a necessary medium for meeting human needs.

These researches are a part of a broader research, where in the next phase empirically obtained data will be analyzed in order to define the state of civic identity in Montenegro and measures for its improvement.

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