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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN FORMING THE SOLIDARITY GENERATION OF MODERN STUDENTS

Abstract. *The paper focuses on the theoretical analysis of the specifics of civic engagement in educating the solidarity generation of university students. The purpose of the article is to explore the features of civic engagement in fostering a generation of university students grounded in solidarity. The general objectives for achieving this aim were: 1) to study and identify the essence of the notion “solidarity generation”; 2) to highlight the concept of solidarity as a pedagogical category; 3) to analyze civic engagement as an effective method of interpersonal interaction in forming the solidarity generation of students. The study employed the following theoretical methods: analysis and synthesis to formulate the foundational propositions of the article; and examination and systematization of primary sources on the topic under study.*

The essence of the notion “solidarity generation” is highlighted. The concept of solidarity as a pedagogical category, which encompasses interaction, friendly intentions, and moral and ethical obligations, is covered. The modern generation of students is considered to be the solidarity generation, encouraged by their deep concern for each other, their interconnectedness in today’s changing, interdependent world, and their striving for a common goal: unity and social justice. The civic engagement as an effective method of interpersonal interaction in forming the solidarity generation of students is analyzed. Civic engagement of students is viewed as their active and confident involvement in the activities of communities at the local, state and global levels for the general public benefit as a whole and for the development of solidary relationships in particular. Civic engagement refers to civic and/or political actions contextualized in different settings (e.g., campus or community, national or global, and online), encouraging young people, representatives of the solidarity generation, to further proactive participation in the life of the community, the state, etc., increases their knowledge about a certain community and its problems, makes them more tolerant and sympathetic to others. In this context, solidarity becomes a need for the development of effective subject-to-subject interaction in today’s higher education, and it is based on the unification of such concepts as common interests, interconnectedness, unanimity, interdependence, joint responsibility, providing for the pooling of resources and opportunities for all actors to achieve common goals while maintaining the interests of each and every subject in balance with public interests.

Keywords: *civic engagement, subject-to-subject interaction, proactive behavior, solidarity, solidarity generation, students.*

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Introduction. Today, in the conditions of Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine, one of the key aspects of building values in our country is the unity of society and the solidarity of all its citizens. Therefore, understanding the concept of solidarity, its main characteristics and spheres of implementation, particularly in higher education, is highly topical to Ukrainian society. In this regard, the role of this paper is difficult to overestimate, as a result of which the study of solidarity as an attempt to fill the gaps in our limited perception of the surrounding world ensures human

cohesion in the face of open uncertainty of both the present and the future, which leads to active interdependence among modern people, who share this uncertainty, and then solidarity becomes a support for them. So, solidarity is not just an emotional need, but a practical requirement to encourage interpersonal relationships between people. In this context, solidarity becomes a need for the development of effective subject-to-subject interaction in today's higher education, and it is based on the unification of such concepts as common interests, interconnectedness, unanimity, interdependence, joint responsibility, providing for the pooling of resources and opportunities for all actors to achieve common goals while maintaining the interests of each subject in balance with public interests. This multifaceted phenomenon under study involves moral, political and socio-cultural elements, which in turn are supported by one or another organizational infrastructure and its institutional factors, in our research – institutions of higher education.

Various issues on the concept of solidarity in the academic context of a higher education institution have been studied by: C. Balik, D. Sharon, S. Kelishek and N. Tabak, (solidarity of students); A. Burgess-Proctor, G. Cassano, D. Condrón, H. Lyons and G. Sanders (solidarity and its impact on effective strategies for improving students' written works); J. Bieliauskaitė and N. Valavicienė (the formation of students' solidarity and culture of academic integrity); B. Maley (student solidarity in cases of academically dishonest behavior); J. Moroz and O. Swabowski (academic solidarity); D. Robbins (solidarity and social inclusion); F. Rodriguez (methods for the development of solidarity skills and their impact on student learning productivity) and others.

Aim and tasks. The aim of the article was to study the specifics of civic engagement in educating the solidarity generation of university students. The overall objectives with a view to achieving the established goal were as follows: 1) to study and identify the essence of the notion "solidarity generation"; 2) to highlight the concept of solidarity as a pedagogical category; 3) to analyze civic engagement as an effective method of interpersonal interaction in forming the solidarity generation of students.

Research methods. In the paper, the following theoretical methods were exploited: analysis and synthesis – to formulate the initial provisions of the paper; study and systematization of primary sources on the issue under study.

Research results. The concept of "generation" is being developed quite actively in modern scientific and pedagogical discourse [4], based on the ideas of Karl Mannheim [12] on the formation of generational consciousness due to the common experience of historical trauma, and the thoughts of Pierre Bourdieu [1] about social and cultural shifts as results of intergenerational struggle for resources. Modern scholars consider the term "generation" highly relevant to understanding societal changes and challenges. It is in relation to young people who experience particularly meaningful events during the period of their youth that figurative constructs-labels of

the generation category are most often used, capturing the general, significant feature of socio-cultural changes. Such names as generation “X”, “Y”, “NET” and others are exploited to describe various aspects of the socio-cultural experience of today’s youth. Overall, generational theory provides a cyclical perspective from which to gain insight into societal shifts and patterns, and it highlights how the current generation of young people is at the forefront of shaping the future.

It is common knowledge that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in the USA led to the formation of a new generation, the so-called “September generation,” which challenges the cultural hegemony of the sixties generation. J. Edmunds and B. Turner argue that not classes but generations have formed modern cultural, intellectual, and political thinking [4, p. 118]. Millennials or Generation Y, also known as digital natives, were replaced by Generation Z (born after 1996), whose representatives are also called Zoomers, Coronials, or Quarantines. The post-millennial Generation Z is defined by its digital status and is characterized by its belief in equality and non-discrimination in all spheres of society. Unlike their predecessors, representatives of this generation are considered more active in defending their rights, protecting the environment, and solving gun control issues. At the same time, the distinguishing feature of the postmillennials was that they had to inherit a strong economy with record-low unemployment. However, the events of 2020 made their adjustments, and now, as America’s most diverse generation in history, postmillennial Zs are the most adaptable to survive. According to the collective opinion of the team of researchers led by Judith Torney-Purta, *professor of human development* and *affiliate professor of public affairs of the University of Maryland (USA)*, the current generation, since the formation of the United States as a state, is one of the most interested in the prosperity and preservation of democracy, as evidenced by the increase in the number of young people who are involved in different types of civic and socially significant activities [15, p. 6]. Today, most young people participate in one or another social activity after graduating from a higher education institution. This is determined by the readiness of young people as members of a democratic society for conscious and responsible activity for the benefit of the community, which gives them the opportunity to set and solve tasks that have no analogues in the experience of past generations.

The diversity of the rising Generation Z goes beyond ethnic identity; it includes gender identity and diversity, the fight against xenophobia, and issues that cut across all socio-economic strata of society. Postmillennials pay a lot of attention to the formation of their “I”, but not according to the model “I-I”, but “I and others as a whole”. At the same time, while national solidarity is still important, today there are a lot of calls for solidarity that is transnational and cosmopolitan [9; 10]. These calls for cosmopolitan solidarity are based on a growing awareness that constant global challenges, such as environmental degradation, can only be solved by crossing national borders [4].

In view of all the abovementioned reasons, the U.S. educational researcher Timothy Law Snyder [14], Ph.D., president of Loyola Marymount University, has coined the term the “solidarity generation” to name the young people of Generation Z, encouraged by their deep concern for each other, their interconnectedness in today’s changing interdependent world and striving for a common goal, for unity and social justice. The concept “solidarity” in that term, unlike, for example, a subculture, refers to a special type of communication carried out through shared meaningful ideas, as well as by the intuitive trust of individuals in a group with which they are connected by something more than age, style or common leisure. Solidarity is a unity (of a group or class) that generates and/or is based on common interests, goals, and standards. When people are united, it is difficult to separate them. It is impossible to influence one part of the group without affecting the interests of another part: there is a relationship between them, even interdependence [14]. For the group to be cohesive and share common values, the concept of active engagement is very important. After all, joint activity is the core of relationships in a group. For the generation Z, solidarity generation, unity and joint activities aimed at the common good are extremely important. In addition, the core principles of this cohort of young people (such as: diversity, caring for each other, interaction) contribute to the long-term impact of their proactive behavior for the good of the sustainable society. The significant tasks, which are solved jointly on a voluntary basis, is a defining feature of the modern solidarity generation.

Considering the aforementioned, it should be emphasized that understanding the concept of solidarity as a pedagogical category encompasses interaction, friendly intentions and moral and ethical obligations [3; 8]. Solidarity is relational; it requires conscious attention to interpersonal relationships and dynamic interpersonal interactions that produce similarities and differences that animate those relationships. Such relational attention is not simply a general awareness of how relationships shape individuals as personalities but rather an active engagement based on a critical attitude. In this regard, solidary relations involve certain transformations, which cause moral and ethical obligations grounded on reciprocity and consent. Solidarity without consent or reciprocity risks not just defeat but the perpetuation of oppressive conditions and undermining relationships and actions that underpin solidarity. Honneth views solidarity as “an interactive relationship in which subjects mutually sympathize with their various different ways of life because, among themselves, they esteem each other symmetrically”, while solidarity in society is achieved when “every member of a society is in a position to esteem himself or herself” [11, p. 128–129]. Given his thought of people respecting each other “symmetrically”, the scholar refers to a situation in which people consider each other in the light of values that allow the abilities and characteristics of the other to appear meaningful to shared practice, thereby inspiring genuine concern for the other person, rather than simply showing passive tolerance.

Therefore, civic engagement promotes the development of solidarity relationships, encompassing the socially significant activities aimed at solving some social issues and transforming the surrounding reality based on constant interaction of the educational institution and the nearest social space. Civic engagement of university students ensures their successful integration into society through their proactive behavior (refers to taking control of a situation and making early changes, rather than adjusting to a situation or waiting for something to happen), as well as the development of their values, attitudes, and skills that contribute to both personal and social well-being. This involves: at the personal level – improving one's own moral behavior and managing it; at the social level – developing the skills of productive interpersonal interaction.

Because of the abovementioned, students' civic engagement embraces their active and confident involvement in the activities of communities at the local, state and global levels for the general public benefit as a whole and for the development of solidary relationships in particular. The civic engagement of modern students as a solidarity generation is an activity aimed at changing society for the better and improving the process of acquiring integrated knowledge and the formation of skills, values, and motivation necessary to achieve that goal [15, p. 36].

Civic engagement can operate at any community level and in any community context (including higher education as a context for the age group under study). The level of participation can range from awareness to influence. Three levels of civic participation are singled out: decision-making, impact, and participation in community life [13].

The decision-making area focuses on active participation that directly leads to implementing a policy or practice for a community or an individual or group within that community. This area covers participation in organizational governance and voting [13].

The impact area focuses on actions to inform and influence any or all spheres of community functioning. This area includes: participation in public debates (including participation through social networks); participation in public demonstrations of support or protest (including "virtual" participation through, for example, online petitions); development of proposals for specific actions; selective purchase of products under ethical beliefs regarding the method of their production (i.e., ethical consumption); recognition of corruption [7; 13; 16].

Community participation is based on strengthening ties among community members for the ultimate benefit of that community. It can involve volunteering, participating in the work of public organizations, and gathering information. In particular, volunteering as a form of civic engagement plays an important role in developing the students' solidarity, generating community awareness, and integration into communities outside the university [13; 16]. Additionally, graduates who volunteer at university are more likely to volunteer later in life than their peers who do not volunteer during their studies. Volunteering has been found to boost self-esteem, make mental health more

manageable, improve relationships with other people, and encourage healthier lifestyles. Volunteering also contributes to successful graduate employment later on [6].

Therefore, civic engagement contributes to improving the quality of life in society with the help of both political and non-political measures [5, p. 6]. In other words, civic engagement can take different forms of active and conscious activities in the civic life of one's community (e.g., involvement in public actions, volunteering or performing socially significant activities, community problem-solving, etc.).

Discussion. The results obtained are in good agreement with the studies by G. Brewis, Z. Conn, S. Fernandez and A. O'Boyle [2], H. Brunkhorst [3], A. Ellis Paine, S. McKay, D. Moro [6], S. Fedorenko and Yu. Sharanova [7], R. Gaztambide-Fernández and A. Matute [8]. One of the conditions for the formation of the solidarity generation is the development of social contacts through civic engagement as a conscious socially significant activity aimed at the well-being of the civic life of communities, as well as acquiring a set of knowledge, skills, values and motivation necessary for making a difference with a view to successful life in the 21st century. It also contributes to the effective setting of common goals and guidelines and adaptation to new conditions of a rapidly changing socio-cultural environment.

Our theoretical study contributes to the continuing discussions on the issue of solidarity in the educational environment of a modern university.

Conclusion. Considering all the aforementioned, we can summarize that the theory of generations provides a cyclical perspective to gain insight into societal shifts and patterns. Modern Generation Z called the solidarity generation, sets and solves tasks analogous to past generations' experiences. The solidarity generation of university students manifests their proactive behavior, which presupposes taking control of a situation and making early changes rather than adjusting to a situation or waiting for something to happen. The generation under study is defined by their ability to be effectively and confidently involved in the activities of communities at the local, state, and global levels for the general public benefit. Civic engagement promotes the development of solidarity generation, encompassing the socially significant activities aimed at solving some social issues and transforming the surrounding reality based on constant interaction of the educational institution and the nearest social space. Civic engagement refers to civic and/or political actions contextualized in different settings (e.g., campus or community, national or global, and online). This encourages young people as representatives of the solidarity generation to further proactive participation in the community, the state, etc., increases their knowledge about society and its problems, and makes them more tolerant and sympathetic to others. In this context, solidarity becomes a need for the development of effective subject-to-subject interaction in today's higher education, and it is based on the unification of such concepts as common interests,

interconnectedness, unanimity, interdependence, joint responsibility, providing for the pooling of resources and opportunities for all actors to achieve common goals while maintaining the interests of every subject in balance with public interests.

The scope for further research encompasses studying the specifics of creating a favorable educational environment in a modern university for developing the personality potential of students as representatives of the solidarity generation.

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ГРОМАДЯНСЬКА ЗАЛУЧЕНІСТЬ У ФОРМУВАННІ ПОКОЛІННЯ СОЛІДАРНОСТІ СУЧАСНИХ СТУДЕНТІВ

Анотація. Стаття присвячена теоретичному аналізу специфіки громадянської залученості у вихованні покоління солідарності студентів університету. Метою статті було дослідити особливості громадянської активності у вихованні солідарного покоління студентів університету. Загальними завданнями для досягнення поставленої мети були: 1) вивчити та визначити сутність поняття «генерація солідарності»; 2) висвітлити поняття солідарності як педагогічної категорії; 3) проаналізувати громадянську активність як ефективний метод міжособистісної взаємодії у формуванні солідарної генерації студентів. У роботі використано такі теоретичні методи: аналізу та синтезу – для формулювання вихідних положень статті; вивчення та систематизація першоджерел з досліджуваного питання.

Висвітлено сутність поняття «покоління солідарності». Розглянуто поняття солідарності як педагогічної категорії, що охоплює взаємодію, дружні наміри й морально-етичні зобов'язання. Сучасне покоління студентів, назване поколінням солідарності, вирізняє глибока турбота один про одного, взаємопов'язаність у сучасному мінливому взаємозалежному світі та прагнення до спільної мети, єдності й соціальної справедливості. Проаналізовано громадянську залученість як ефективний метод міжособистісної взаємодії у формуванні покоління солідарності сучасних студентів.

Громадянська залученість студентів розглядається як їхня активна й упевнена участь у діяльності громад на місцевому, державному та глобальному рівнях задля загального суспільного блага загалом та розвитку солідарних взаємин зокрема. Громадська залученість передбачає громадянські та/або політичні дії, контекстуалізовані в різних середовищах (наприклад, університетському кампусі чи громаді, на національному чи глобальному рівнях, офлайн та онлайн), спонукаючи молодих людей – представників покоління солідарності – до подальшої активної участі в житті громади, держави тощо, розширює їхні знання про певну громаду та її проблеми, робить їх більш толерантними й чуйними до інших людей. У цьому контексті солідарність стає необхідністю розвитку ефективної суб'єкт-суб'єктної взаємодії в сучасній вищій школі, базуючись на комплексному поєднанні таких понять, як спільні інтереси, взаємопов'язаність, одностайність, взаємозалежність, спільна відповідальність, передбачаючи об'єднання ресурсів і можливостей усіх суб'єктів для досягнення спільних цілей за збереження інтересів кожного суб'єкта в балансі із суспільними інтересами.

Ключові слова: громадянська залученість, суб'єкт-суб'єктна взаємодія, проактивна поведінка, солідарність, покоління солідарності, студенти.

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