

The text concentrates on two important phenomenons of contemporary world: "democracy" and "identity". Its two main questions are: (I) Is the development of "open identities" desirable in "democratic states"? (II) What kind of conditions is favorable to this development? Answering to these questions is divided into two parts: theoretical inquiry and practical investigation of the Civil Rights Movement. The theoretical part focuses on the notions of "universalism" and "project of identity". It argues that we should be cautious when we encounter with the claims of universality because they may serve as a cloak of exclusion and legitimize political actions. "Projects of identity" are visions which ascribe certain characteristics to categories of people and try to represent and/or activate them; they are connected not only with excluded but with excluders as well and we may judge them according to specific criterias that are presented in the text. The practical section deals with the african-american Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and the 1960s and studies concrete "projects of identity" as they were articulated by African Americans. Firstly it is concerned with the nature of their exclusion, secondly it pays attention to three representants of given era (Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael), thirdly it shows how four major organizations (NAACP, CORE, SCLC, and SNCC) approached the problem of exclusion, and lastly it traces up and compares the characteristics of various "projects" that were introduced by the Civil Rights Movement. The text concludes (I) that unless we know the context we can not (and therefore should not) decide on principle whether the "projects of identity" as such are good or bad for "democracy" and (II) that recognition of injustice and adequate redress are the necessary preconditions for "open projects of identity".