



AIMS AND OUTCOMES OF THE MODULE

AIM(S)

- Explore educational identities in relation to knowledge, power, culture and social relations
- Evaluate historical and contemporary theoretical accounts of educational cultures, values and practices

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to demonstrate the ability to:
- Analyse different theoretical definitions of culture and identity
- Explore educational, sociological and cultural conceptions of self, identity and subjectivity
- Critically evaluate the ways in which theoretical explanations of identity can be used to evaluate educational processes, practices and institution
- Reflect on the formation and development of your own identity; evaluate which formed in and through your educational experiences

STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

Monday 30th November

- Introduction to the module
- An introduction to cultural theory

Thursday 3rd December

- Young people, gang culture and the emergence of the 'teenager'
- Cults and the psychology of cult theory

Monday 7th December

- Language and cultural development
- Rise of nationhood

Thursday 10th December

- Gender, ethnicity and identity

Monday 4th January

- Global cultures and differences

Thursday 7th January

- Consumer culture and future challenges

MODULE ASSESSMENT

- [Assessment 1](#) – Poster presentation (50%)
Submission date 11th January
- [Assessment 2](#) – Essay (50%)
Submission date 18th January

TASK



- Imagine that you are writing a brief profile for yourself for a dating website. Write down what you would like prospective dates to know about you.
- Now compare your profile to others in the class and note down what themes or commonalities there are amongst everyone. What types of information is everyone writing down?

SOME THEORY

- Identity formation process begins with a self-categorization in which individuals realize and internalize the roles that were expected of them (Stets and Burke 2000)
- Identities arise from a 'narrativization of the self' (Hall and Du Gay, 2002 p.4)
- Can be influenced by group dynamics – you become the person you think the 'group' wants you to be.
- Identities are constructed through difference

IDENTITY

- Identity is like an onion
- Primary identities – those formed in early life and include such things as gender, ethnicity and possibly disability
- Secondary identities – build on our primary identities and include such things that are associated with social roles and achieved statuses
- Stryker (1980) cannot separate the self from society as it is only meaningful in relation to others within society
- Giddens (2013) – identities mark out similarities and differences in social interaction. How?

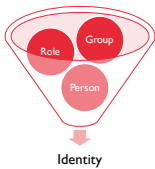


REFLECTION



- Think of an incident when your identity has been challenged – how did that make you feel? How did you react and how did you 'prove' you were who you claimed to be?
- Can we draw any conclusions from this about what society deems crucial in establishing identity?

FACTORS AFFECTING IDENTITY (STETS AND BURKE 2003)



- Structure** – external and structural factors that influence our identity, we generally don't have any control over these
- Agency** – can use our behavioural options to react against the structure, requires creativity and imagination



- Social identity theory – group identity can be a stronger factor than individual identity, 'in-group' and 'out-group'. Depersonalisation of members
- Personal identity theory – '*personal identity is an under analysed level of the self*' (Hirdin, 2003 p.118). Can also be seen as a sense of self built up over time.
- Identities are never unified and are becoming increasingly fractured and fragmented in modern times



DEBATING CULTURAL THEORY

TASK

- You have 10 minutes to find 3 artefacts that you believe tell us something important about your contemporary culture. You must come back and be prepared to share your artefacts with the rest of the group



QUESTION

- What does the term culture mean to you?



SOME ANSWERS

- Culture 'means whatever we use it to mean' (Keesing, 1974)
- 'when you hear the word "culture" you reach for your dictionary' (Appiah, 2005)

SOME PERSPECTIVES

- 'the shared way of life of a group of people' (Berry JW, Poortinga Y H, Segall M H and Dassen P R, 1992)
- 'the way we do things around here' (Charles Handy)
- Different groups of people in different parts of the world "formed different sets of logical assumptions" about how to solve the problems faced in survival: "people's relationship to time, nature and other human beings" (Trompenaars 1993)
- "Individuals from a given cultural group develop behaviour patterns and subjective cultures that are functional for their particular environment" (Albert and Triandis 1994)

- Over long periods of time such practices become so absorbed into a group's way of life that it can become difficult to be aware of, or articulate, what the culture is:
- "Culture is like gravity: you do not experience it until you jump six feet in the air" (Trompenaars 1993)
- People in different cultures have different "patterns of thinking and acting" which, in computer terms, can be described as "software of the mind"
- Culture means "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another" (Hofstede G 1994)
- Culture shapes the mind and "provides us with the toolkit by which we construct not only our own worlds but our very conceptions of ourselves and our powers" (Bruner 1996)

TRYING TO UNDERSTAND CULTURE IS...

like a fish trying to understand water - the water is something that a fish is surrounded by at all times, that it is part of and cannot get away from. Culture surrounds us at all times and, therefore, it is not possible to perceive one's own culture objectively"

Fennes H and Hapgood K (1997)

The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg, nine-tenths of culture is below the surface.

Surface Culture

Above sea level
Emotional load: relatively low

food • dress • music •
visual arts • drama • crafts
dance • literature • language
celebrations • games

Deep Culture

Unspoken Rules
Partially below sea level
Emotional load: very high

Unconscious Rules
Completely below sea level
Emotional load: intense

courtesy • contextual conversational patterns • concept of time
personal space • rules of conduct • facial expressions
nonverbal communication • body language • touching • eye contact
patterns of handling emotions • notions of modesty • concept of beauty
courtship practices • relationships to animals • notions of leadership
tempo of work • concepts of food • details of child-rearing
theory of disease • social interaction rate • nature of friendships
tone of voice • attitudes toward elders • concept of cleanliness
notions of adolescence • patterns of group decision-making
definition of insanity • preference for competition or cooperation
tolerance of physical pain • concept of "self" • concept of past and future
definitions of ethnicity • attitudes toward dependence • problem-solving
roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and so forth

FENNES & HAPGOOD (1997)

"only a small part of it is visible. A large portion of what constitutes culture is beyond or below our conscious awareness. We know how to act and behave according to it but we are not aware of it and subsequently cannot control it. We take culture as self-evident, like nature, and not as if it were a construction of our society."



SOME RELATED CONCEPTS...

- Conflict theory: eg Sherif et al (1961):
- Conflict is likely to arise between groups that have the same goal but cannot both achieve it: related to the notion of scarcity Social identity theory (eg Tajfel and Turner, 1986): derived from an individual's perceptions of the groups to which he or she belongs (Gross, 2001)
- Each individual may have a number of social identities, depending upon the group(s) with which he or she identifies
- Establishing a positive social identity can be linked to the development of negative feelings about other groups



- The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954)
- Prejudice *may* (but will not necessarily) be reduced if at least three conditions are present (ie contact alone is not enough): equal status contact; the pursuit of common goals; institutional support.



REFLECTION

- How have the following impacted upon you in terms of your understanding of and engagement with culture?
1. Family
 2. Friends
 3. Media
