

CULTURE, IDENTITY & EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE: THEORIES OF IDENTITY FORMATION

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?
- Remember looking at Erikson's theories of development last year? How does this link to the formation of your own identity?

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?

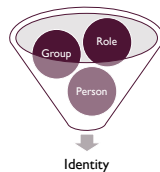


REFLECTION

- 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



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- **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' (Hidlin, 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
