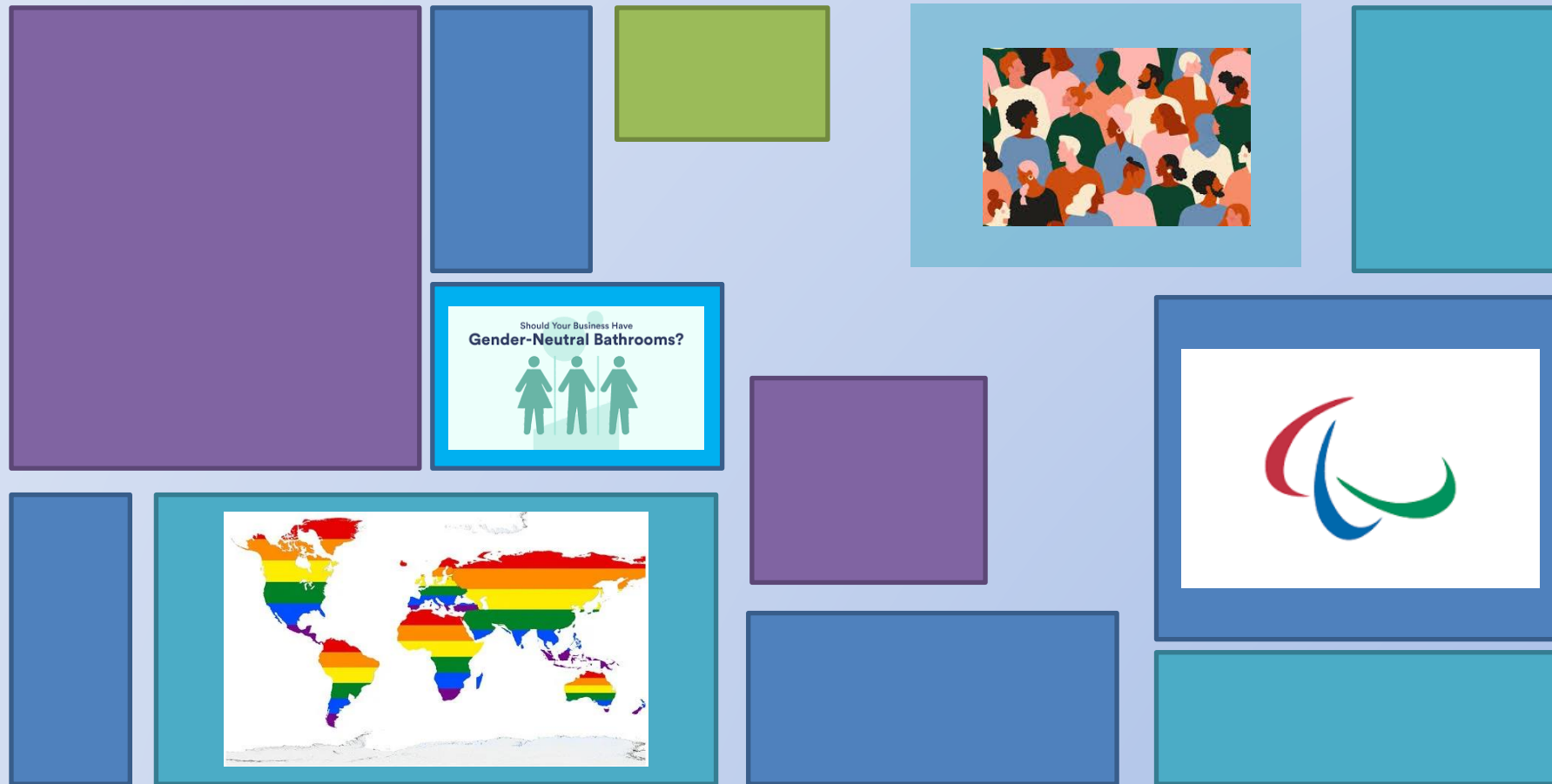




ECSO5001: Diversity & Difference in a Modern World

Theme 3: Diversity & Difference – Some Key Concepts

Learning Review



What did we look at in our last Theme?



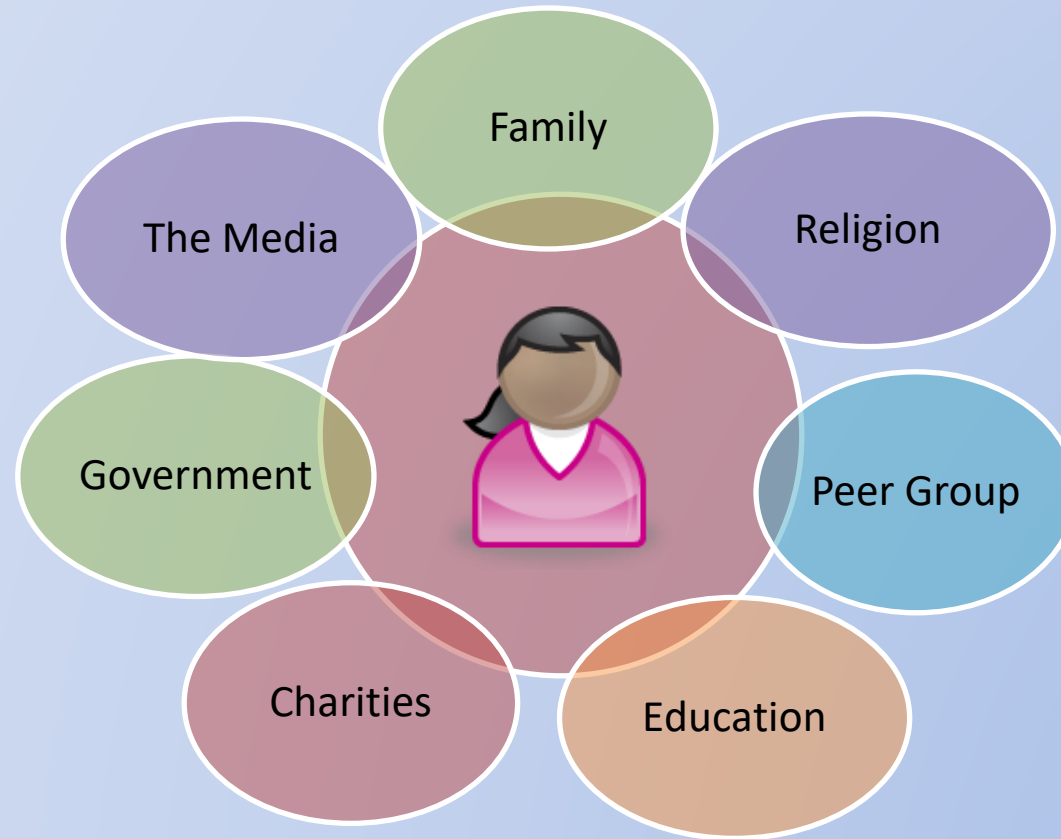
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Attitudes, beliefs and values

- Throughout your studies you will be asked to look at attitudes, beliefs and values
- If we look back to ECSO4002: Who Are We – Culture & Identity we can see that this has been a continuing theme
- We will continue to explore the way in which our values about certain issues are influenced by different ‘agencies of socialisation’

Who am I?

Agencies of socialisation = influences on our values



Key Concepts

Along with our understanding of values there are other key concepts that we need to keep in mind as we continue our studies.



Each Key Concept raises questions for us.

Perception

- The way in which we are 'socialised' can affect our perceptions of society
- Therefore, public perceptions are influenced by the agents of socialisation
- What we are shown and the way that we are shown it can influence our perceptions of events
- Thus, the public, political discourse regarding inequality and diversity is increasingly based on personal opinion rather than empirical evidence
- This danger was identified in the 1970's by Michel Foucault when he wrote the 'discourse' is 'perspectival' i.e. that truth is in the eye of beholder

Different Points of View



Values

- “principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important in life”. OED
- “the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something” OED
- Define our morality and aspirations
- Represent our vision of the person we would like to be – they drive our behaviour

But Whose Values?

‘Dominant’ Values

- ‘middle class’ values
- ‘ruling class’ values
- political system
- legal system
- state religion

‘Sub-cultural’ Values

- ‘working class’ values
- ‘under-class’ values
- peer group values e.g.
 - gangs, goths
- ‘radical’ values e.g.
 - feminism,
 - environmentalism

Our place in the debate

As Students of Social Inclusion, we need to:

- Distinguish between ‘evidence’ and ‘popular discourse’
- Reflect on the origins of our own values and behaviours towards others



Values and perceptions

- Our values are shaped by our experiences
- In turn our values influence the way that we look at the world
- They influence our attitudes to individuals and groups of people
- They influence the decisions that we make

Discuss your perceptions of the values held by people in the EU referendum (Leave, Remain & non-voters)

Remember that, as social scientists we need to be objective



Our place in the debate

- In order to reflect on our place in any debate on current issues we need to be aware of our own values.
- We have talked about values in many other Modules but in this one we will be looking closely at our own attitudes to current issues.
- You will be asked to under-take an online self-assessment and the results of this will contribute to our discussion on our values as a group.
- But first we will look at the concept of **political positioning**

Left wing / Right Wing

- This way of describing political positioning dates back to the Constituent Assembly at the start of the French Revolution (1789).
- In the chamber the radical Jacobins radicals sat on the left side of the King's seat; moderates sat in the centre; and royalists and clerical members sat on the right.
- The terms passed into general use to refer to the opposition between the egalitarian, democratic, and anticlerical views of many reformers and radicals, and the defence of aristocratic and clerical privileges by conservatives and reactionaries

Left wing / Right Wing

- The meaning of the phrases has changed somewhat since this time.
- For example economic liberalization and free trade—was once a radical proposition in many contexts, it has migrated to the right as part of the neo-liberal agenda.
- Left-wing agendas have been generally much more tied to forms of state regulation and intervention in economic life—reflecting the modern pursuit of egalitarian goals with the tools of the welfare state
- The 20th century model of UK politics saw the Conservative Party on the right, the Liberal Democrats in the centre and the Labour party on the left but this has changed again in the 21st century
- We will explore this change further as we discuss the next two concepts

Authoritarianism

- A style of government in which the rulers demand unquestioning obedience from the ruled.
- Traditionally, 'authoritarians' have argued for a high degree of determination by governments of belief and behaviour and a correspondingly smaller significance for individual choice but did leave some room for private choice
- This has been enhanced by the concept of totalitarianism (mostly closely associated with fascism and state communism) in which even personal freedom is restricted
- However, even democratically elected governments can drastically restrict personal freedoms

Can you think of examples from recent history?



Libertarianism

- Refers primarily to a range of theories and attitudes whose common characteristic is that they seek to reverse the progress of collectivism and authoritarianism and to 'roll back the frontiers of the state'.
- Traditionally, 'libertarian' denoted a believer in free will, as opposed to determinism;
- A further meaning referred to a kind of principled libertine, a person in favour of breaking down whatever inhibited and constrained natural or instinctive behaviour, whether it was religious belief, family ties, or the enforcement of laws by the state. But these meanings are now antiquated.

Libertarianism

- The most precise form of libertarianism rests on a belief in the essential separateness of individual persons who possess, quite irrespective of whether or not they are part of a society or subject to the laws of a state, a set of inalienable rights, which necessarily include rights to acquire and retain property.
- Libertarians would argue that the denial of these rights by states can never be defensible and people should only consider themselves subject to states in so far as those states enhance their rights or rest on voluntary procedures.

Can you think of examples from recent history?



Our Own Political Positioning

- The concepts of right / left and authoritarian / libertarian can allow us to create a schematic representation of where different politicians and parties sit in relation to each other
- This idea has been used by a website called 'The Political Compass'
- Although not a formal research tool it does allow us to evaluate and reflect on our own political positioning

In preparation for our next session please follow the link below and 'Take the Test'.



Equal Opportunities

- The idea that all persons, regardless of class, age, race or gender, should have equal rights to compete for and attain sought after positions in society.

Question

- *Can this ideal be delivered within current structures and systems?*

Oppression

- There is no simple definition of oppression, to attempt to find a simple definition is to deny its complexity. However, Dalrymple and Burke (2006) cite Mitchell (1989), who captures the essence of oppression in the UK:

‘British society is saturated in oppression.. empowering practice addresses itself to the powerlessness and loss which results from the material and ideological oppression of black people by white people; working class people by middle class people, women by men; children and old people by ‘adults’; disabled people by ‘able bodied’ people; and gay people by straight people. This recognises oppression not simply in the behaviours, values and attitudes of individuals and groups but in the institutions, structures and common sense assumptions’.

Stereotype

- A set of inaccurate, simplistic generalisations about a group of individuals which enables others to categorise members of this group and treat them routinely according to these expectations.

Question

- How does stereotyping lead to social exclusion?

(See for example Scott, 2014)

Ethnicity

- A shared racial, linguistic or national identity of a social group. A distinction may be drawn between *cultural ethnicity* and *political ethnicity*. Racial attributes are not necessarily, or even usually, the defining feature of ethnic groups.

Question

- Which is a better multi-culturalism or integration?

(See for example Scott, 2014)

Prejudice

- Prejudice – an opinion or attitude which is unsupported by the facts. Prejudiced opinions are unfounded and often not formed through first hand experience. As with all attitudes prejudices are the result of social learning within families and other social groups where opportunities for modelling and strong pressures towards conformity exist.

Question

- How good are we at recognising prejudice in ourselves?



Community

- One of the most difficult and controversial things to define in modern society
- Any set of social relationships operating within certain boundaries, locations or territories.

Questions

- Can we talk of community in the singular or are there many communities?



Culture

- The human creation and use of symbols and artefacts. Culture may be taken as constituting the 'way of life' of an entire society, and this will include codes of manners, dress, language, rituals, norms of behaviour and systems of belief.

Question

- What happens when two cultures have opposite values?



Ethnocentrism

- The attitude of prejudice or mistrust towards outsiders which may exist within a social group; a way of perceiving one's own cultural group (in-group) in relation to others (out-groups). Thus, one's own culture is considered to be racially, morally and culturally of greater value or significance than that of others and one becomes distrustful of those defined as outsiders.

Xenophobia

- An exaggerated hostility towards or fear of foreigners.
- An irrational hatred of people from other countries

Racism or Racialism

- A set of beliefs, ideologies and social processes that discriminate against others on the basis of their supposed membership of a 'racial' group.

Tolerance

- ‘A recognition of a religiously pluralistic Wales is one thing and a tolerance of ethnic diversity is perhaps another, but only an unqualified acceptance of the right of minority faith groups to participate within civil society can truly be termed religious tolerance’ (Chambers, 2005)

Labelling

- This describes the process by which people and groups of people are given 'labels' by society
- It is commonly used in studies of deviance and education but applies to all of society
- Labelling can be both positive and negative

Question

- What examples can you think of?

Stigma

- ‘A powerfully negative social label that radically changes a person’s self-concept and social identity’

(Macionos & Plummer, 2012, p.610)

Question

- What does this mean in practice?
- Once people are stigmatised then they often ‘live up’ to that label.



‘Othering’

- A process first described by the post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak in 1985
- It is a process that relies on ‘power asymmetries’ or imbalances i.e. one group has power over other groups
- The ‘other’ is defined in terms of binary opposites; e.g.
 - Us and them
 - Male and female
 - White and black
 - Right and wrong
 - Sane and insane
 - Law abiding and criminal
 - Deserving and undeserving

'Othering'

- Spivak, who was mostly looking at post-colonial societies, identified three forms of othering
 1. Those who have power perceive the other as subordinate or less important
 2. The 'other' is seen as morally inferior, sub-standard, barbaric or uncivilised
 3. The 'other' is denied access to knowledge, technology and the means of improving their position
- However, the process can be seen in a variety of situations

'Othering'

- Once a person or group has been 'othered' then they are often subject to degradation and mis-treatment

What examples can you think of?



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