

Identity in a diverse society

Crossing Borders International Module on Participation and Citizenship



Who are we?

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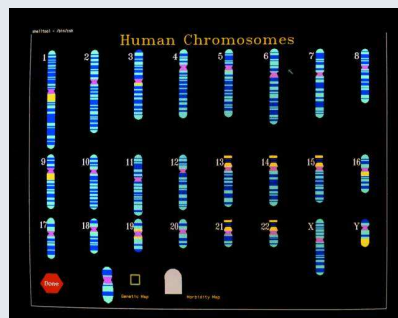
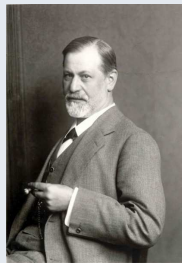


Identity?

- ▶ **Remaining the same over time: continuity**

- ▶ **Showing certain qualities in different situations: coherence**

- ▶ **In our genes or acquired gradually?**



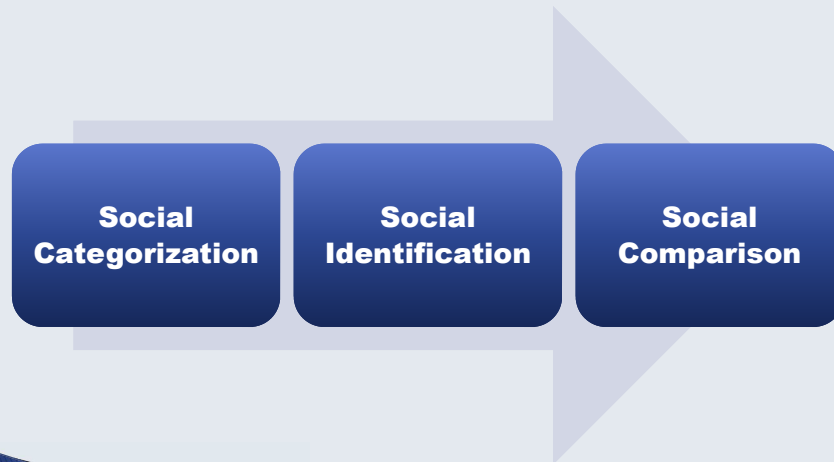
Our point

From	To
Traditional view	Alternative view
Psychological orientation	Sociological orientation
Identity as remaining who one is	Identification as a continuous process
Looking for the core	Looking for relationships
Less useful to study diversity	More useful to study diversity

21st Century View

In-group versus Out of group	Tajfel proposed that groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world
Henri Tajfel proposed that stereotyping (i.e. putting people into groups and categories) is based on a normal cognitive process: the tendency to group things together. In doing so we tend to exaggerate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the differences between groups 2. the similarities of things in the same group

Three mental processes involved in evaluating others as “us” or “them”

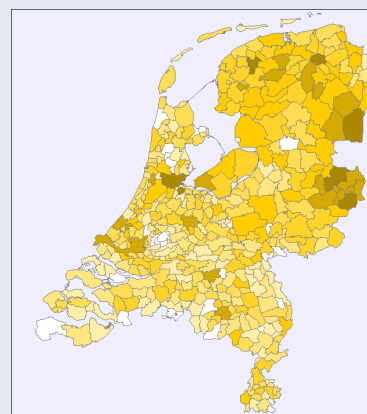


Kuipers (=Coopers =Du Tonnelier) What ‘s in a name? (1)



- ▶ Surnames or family names often indicate:
 - Places of origin
 - Old crafts
 - Baker
 - Smith
 - Cooper
- ▶ We always get them from others

Family names are not random



13,987 times Kuipers / Kuiper / Cupers etc. in 2007

- ▶ Migration or horizontal mobility:
 - From the countryside to an industrial town
 - From the east to the west
- ▶ Vertical of social mobility:
 - From agricultural labour, via cottage industry, to industry and services

Sociological processes

Hans-Jan (=John-John) What 's in a name? (2)



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What's in a Name (3) Not some funny Dutch thing



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Addresses & Place of Birth



Winnemucca
Nevada
Zanesville Ohio
Arlington Texas
Dallas Texas
Texarkana
Arkansas
Indianapolis
Indiana
Grove City Ohio
Alexandria
Kentucky
Newport
Kentucky
Ft. Thomas
Kentucky
Cold Spring
Kentucky
Hollywood
Florida
Crittenden
Kentucky
St. Louis
Missouri
Nashville
Tennessee
Franklin Indiana
Bar Mills Maine
This summer
moving to
Machias Maine

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Social differentiation



Private life and Family

Professional Life

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Also outside the US: places of birth vary from addresses



From east to west

Quite a change of
scenery

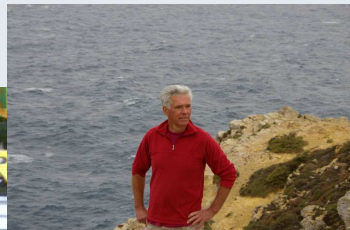
And social differentiation occurs everywhere



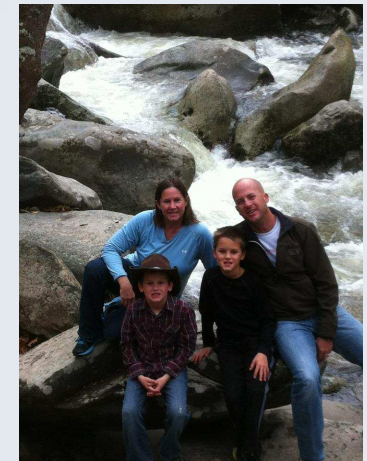
Private life and family

Professional life

And spare time



And spare time



Some initial sociological conclusions

- ▶ **People identify themselves by telling who, where or what they belong to**
- ▶ **Social differentiation and mobility influence the way we identify ourselves**
- ▶ **When we identify ourselves we use the words 'I' and 'me'**
- ▶ **When others identify us they will use the words 'you', 'he' or 'she'**

Classical sociology

- ▶ **Division of labor causes social differentiation**
- ▶ **Mobility is a result of social differentiation**
- ▶ **Spheres of life will be progressively separated**
- ▶ **Each sphere has distinctive rules**



Émile Durkheim
(1858-1917)



Max Weber
(1864-1920)

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931)

- ▶ **Others identify us before we identify ourselves**
- ▶ **We *believe* that we know how others identify us**
- ▶ **We *think* we know what we are like**



Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

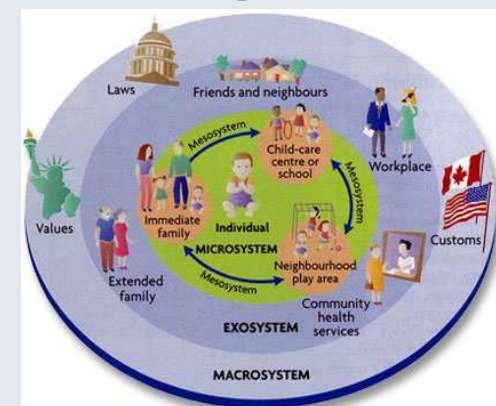
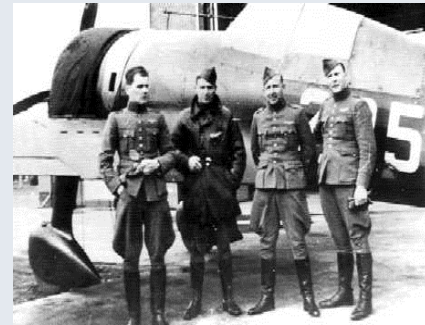


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (in Berk & Roberts, 2009, p. 28)

Identity and the stories we tell

- ▶ In the stories we tell we identify others (you, he, she, they)
- ▶ In the stories we tell we identify ourselves (I and me)
- ▶ We tell stories that relate to other people, but simultaneously tell a lot about us

Uncle in May 1940 (before I was around)



School near Arnhem in September 1944 (again, before I was around)



Group from my primary school during a recent reunion



- ▶ Five persons from an orthodox protestant family
- ▶ Four persons from the former Dutch colony Indonesia
- ▶ One person from the former Dutch colony New Guinea

The Giver of Spiritual Gifts Winnemucca Nevada



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Class of 67 40th reunion 2007



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Provisional conclusions about identity in a diverse society

- ▶ **Diversity is not a recent phenomena, but part of modernity**
- ▶ **Identity is not a person's original and unalterable core, but an intricate process**
- ▶ **A person's identity is created and recreated in social interaction, and by means of language**

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