

TECH3501-18 Lecture 008 – Intercultural Identity

1 Introduction – what is Culture

Revellers in an East Sussex town who for decades have worn African-style costumes in one of Britain's biggest bonfire celebrations have agreed to stop painting their faces black, ending a practice dating back to at least the second world war. The move came after the Lewes Borough Bonfire Society faced pressure from a dance troupe originating from KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, which was booked to join the society on the march on Saturday night but threatened a boycott after seeing how the members dressed. A local Bonfire Against Racism campaign from a group of black, white and dual-heritage residents had also urged the society to stop blacking up. But many people in the bonfire societies, whose members number in the thousands, have insisted that the practice of blackening their faces is a tradition and a show of respect to Zulu warriors.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/03/lewes-bonfire-society-agrees-to-stop-blackening-up-in-an-annual-parade>

"Hall stated culture is 'those deep, common unstated experiences which members of a given culture share, communicate without knowing, and which form the backdrop against which all other events are judged.' While we all come to see from different cultures we all view the world through cultural lenses; we see the world from our own points of view" (Croucher, 2017, p. 77).

2 Components of Culture

"What is required is a transformation or a revitalisation of the social sciences from a positivistically oriented (emphasising objectification, quantification, causation) realm of inquiry to one that centrally attends to the actualities of human lived experience" (Prus, 1997, p. 4).

"In trying to define culture, there are hundreds of definitions. Each of these definitions shares many components, and differs in some ways too. Linton (1945) defined culture as a 'configuration of learned behaviours and results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by members of a particular society'" (Croucher, 2017, p. 78).

"Hall (1959) stated 'culture is communication and communication is culture'" (Croucher, 2017, p. 78).

"Hall (1976) later defined culture as 'a series of situational models for behaviour and thought'. Geertz (1973) later defined culture as a web people spin. He stated: 'culture is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide action; social structure is the form that action takes, the actually existing network of social relations. Culture and social structure are then but different abstractions from the same phenomena'" (Croucher, 2017, p. 78).

"Hofstede (1984) defined culture as the 'collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.' Lederach (1995) described culture as the 'shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them'" (Croucher, 2017, p. 78).

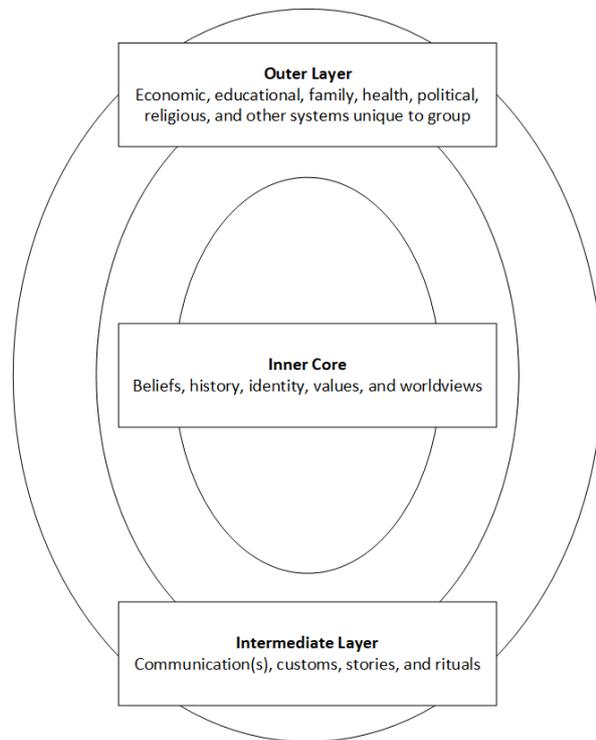
3 Culture as Shared Competence

"Culture, conceived as a system of competence shared in its broad design and deeper principles, and varying between individuals in its specificities, is then not all of what an individual knows and thinks and feels about his [or her] theory of what his [or her] fellows know, believe and mean, his [or her] theory of the code of being followed, the game being played, in the society into which he [or she] was born... Culture in this view is not ordered simply as a collection of symbols fitted together by the analyst but as a system of knowledge, shaped and constrained by the way the human brain acquires, organises, and processes information and creates 'internal models of reality' (Keesing, 1974)" (Quoted in Croucher, 2017, p. 78).

"Culture [can be defined] as the learned way of life of a group of people which consists of the shared experiences, behaviours, thoughts, traditions, values, beliefs, rituals, worldviews, and modes of communication of that group. This definition stresses the following aspects of culture: it is learned, shared, and consists of various components" (Croucher, 2017, p. 79).

4 Layers of Operation

“Dodd (1998) explained how a culture can be divided into three layers: the inner core of a culture, which consists of the group’s beliefs, history, identity, values, and worldviews; the intermediate layer, which consists of the activities of the group that make up the culture, such as art, communication(s), customs, stories, and rituals; and the outer layer, which are the larger cultural systems representing the culture, such as economic, educational, family, health, political, religious, and other systems unique to a cultural group” (Croucher, 2017, p. 79).



5 Beliefs and Values

“The inner core consists of a culture’s beliefs and values, history, identity/identities, and worldviews. These elements of culture are the most difficult to change, as they are the most central to individuals. Beliefs and values are critical to a culture. Beliefs are mental representations of an attitude viewed through a cultural lens, which are felt to be true” (Croucher, 2017, p. 80).

5.1 Cultural Beliefs

“In this sense, our beliefs are representations or constructions of reality (which we believe to be true) that are shaped by our cultural groups, which in turn guide our behaviours” (Croucher, 2017, p. 80).

5.2 Cultural Values

“Values are personal and socially shared ideas of what is acceptable and good behaviour or ideas, which determine how a person should or should not behave or act in a group (culture). Values differ in different cultural groups” (Croucher, 2017, p. 80).

5.3 Shared History

“A culture has a shared history. The history is the heritage, the development, and the origin of the culture. This history is passed on through various means, such as customs, stories, literature, rituals, heroes, and other forms of communication, which will be discussed in the intermediate layer of culture. Our history makes us who we are” (Croucher, 2017, p. 80).

“When telling a historical narrative, the facts are not always 100% essential; the imagery and emotions bind group members together around a common understanding. These shared stories and interpretations told over generations build a cultural narrative, a culture, and a shared identity” (Croucher, 2017, p. 80).

6 Perceived Culture

“Our identities are multifaceted... Researchers have delineated identities into various types: human, personal, and cultural/social. Each of these identities influences how we perceive our culture and our place in a given culture” (Croucher, 2017, p. 80).

“Our personal identity includes those aspects of ourselves that make us different from the other people in our ingroup, or group of people with a shared identity or interest” (Croucher, 2017, p. 81).

“A cultural identity is a perception of ourselves that we believe we share with other members of an ingroup” (Croucher, 2017, p. 81).

“A culture’s worldview, or beliefs about how the world and universe work, is essential to understanding the behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, values, thoughts, and actions of a culture” (Croucher, 2017, p. 81).

“The intermediate layer of culture consists of the group activities that make up the culture, such as art, literature, communication(s), rules, customs, stories, rituals, and other forms of expression (holidays, music, technology, etc.)” (Croucher, 2017, p. 82).

“Rituals are another key activity that differentiate cultures from one another” (Croucher, 2017, p. 82).

7 Communication Practices

“How we communicate is also a key element of what defines us as a culture. As stated earlier in this chapter, ‘culture is communication and communication is culture’” (Croucher, 2017, p. 82).

“The language we are brought up in influences how we see the world” (Croucher, 2017, p. 82).

“The outer layer of culture consists of the macro-cultural systems representing the culture, such as the economic, educational, family, health, political, religious, and other’s systems unique to a cultural group. One significant cultural system that binds together members of a culture, provides its members with an identity, beliefs, values, a worldview, customs, rituals, etc. is religion. A religion is ‘a unified system of beliefs and practice relative to sacred things, that is to say things which are set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them’ (Durkheim, 1976, p.47).” (Croucher, 2017, p. 82).

“Objects only become meaningful to humans only because people acquire a means of communicating or sharing understandings or viewpoints from (and then with) others” (Prus, 1997, p. 7).

“Intersubjectivity occurs through and acknowledgement or sharing of the gestures, symbols, or language of the other. Only in acquiring some familiarity with the images and practices that are meaningful to others is one able to relate to others in the community in comprehensible terms” (Prus, 1997, p. 7).

8 Subcultures

“As forums for the development of activities, perspectives, identities, relationships, and the like, subcultures represent the pivotal setting in which humans engage the world in a more direct, meaningful, and ‘here-and-now’ basis” (Prus, 1997, p. xiii).

“Within every culture there are smaller, microculture, or subcultures. Subcultures are membership groups within a larger group that hold different values and/or norms, or behave differently than the larger (typically defined as dominant) group. Schaefer (2012) identified five characteristics of a subculture. First, members pos-

sess some cultural or physical characteristic that distinguish them from the dominant culture... Second, membership is often not voluntary, but in some cases, it can be... Third, many members of subcultures practice endogamy, or marrying within the ingroup... Fourth, members of the subculture are aware of their membership in the group. When an individual is born into a subculture, which inherently has less political and economic power than the dominant group, they are aware of their status. Minority status in fact often brings members of subcultures together as a community. Finally, subcultures often unfortunately experience discrimination. There are countless examples of minorities throughout history being persecuted due to their minority status. Subcultures also give members identity distinct from the dominant culture through various means: language, dress, rituals, art, history, shared activities, media, and many other means” (Croucher, 2017, p. 85).

8.1 Ethnicity

”An ethnic group is a group with distinctive cultural, linguistic, religious, or national characteristics, which is socially constructed by its members (the ingroup) and the outgroup (those who do not share the group’s characteristics)” (Croucher, 2017, p. 85).

8.2 Fandom

”Fandom refers to a group of people (fans) who have a shared sense of camaraderie with one another over a common interest, and these people spend a significant amount of their time (and often resources) on this interest as part of a social group” (Croucher, 2017, p. 85).

8.3 Learned Way of Life

”As indicated earlier, a culture is the learned way of life of a group of people that consists of the shared experiences, behaviours, thoughts, traditions, values, beliefs, rituals, worldviews, and modes of communication of that group. That particular group will be similar and different in some ways from another group; cultures differ” (Croucher, 2017, p. 87).

9 Cultural Dimension

Human Group Life is (Multi) Perspectival. While Language enables people to communicate with one another and to share definitions of reality with others, each human group is faced with the prospects of making sense of the world and developing lines of action toward the world that enables both baseline survival and the pursuit of any secondary objectives” (Prus, 1997, p. 11).

”Without contesting the viability of any claims or ‘stocks of knowledge’ that people develop, it is important to recognise that people inevitably prioritise viewpoints (and interpretations thereof) whenever they begin to act in meaningful fashions” (Prus, 1997, p. 12).

Hofsede “defined four cultural dimensions that influenced behaviours: individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance” (Croucher, 2017, p. 86).

9.1 Individualism-Collectivism

”Individualism is a preference for loose social networks, and an individual preference for taking care of themselves and their immediate families. For individualists there is a clear preference for individual goals over group goals and the promotion of self-realisation” (Croucher, 2017, p. 87).

”Collectivism is a preference for more tightly knit social networks, and an individual preference for individuals to care for members of their ingroup in exchange for what Hofsede and Bond (1988) call ‘exchange for loyalty’. For collectivistic individuals there is a preference for group goals over individual goals and the promotion of belonging to the group” (Croucher, 2017, p. 87).

9.2 Masculinity-Femininity

”Cultures higher in masculinity tend to be more assertive, competitive, strive more for achievement and heroism, and more highly value success. Cultures higher in femininity tend to be more cooperative, modest, care more for the weak, and strive for higher quality of life for all” (Croucher, 2017, p. 87).

9.3 Power Distance

“Power distance is the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect power to be distributed equally/unequally. Cultures high in power distance easily accept hierarchy, where people have their place in society. It is common in high power distance cultures for the gap between those who have power and those who do not to be large, and this gap is often accepted and not challenged, as challenging is often seen as futile. Low power distance cultures have hierarchy; however, structures within the culture strive to balance the distribution of power within society. It is common in low power distance cultures for the gap between those who have power and those who do not to be small, as power inequalities should be justified” (Croucher, 2017, p. 87).

9.4 Uncertainty Avoidance

“Uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which people feel uncomfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty. How a culture and its members deal with the unknown future is significant. Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance have strict codes and/or rules for behaviour that must be followed, and those cultures can be intolerant when these codes and/or rules are broken. Culture low in uncertainty avoidance tend to have fewer codes or rules for behaviour” (Croucher, 2017, p. 87).

9.5 Short-Term – Long-Term

“Culture with a short-term orientation consider the past or the present as more important than the future. Such cultures value tradition, current hierarchies, and prefer immediate gratification. Cultures with a long-term orientation focus more on the future. Such cultures are willing to go without short-term gratifications, are thrifter, and more willing to save for the future” (Croucher, 2017, p. 88).

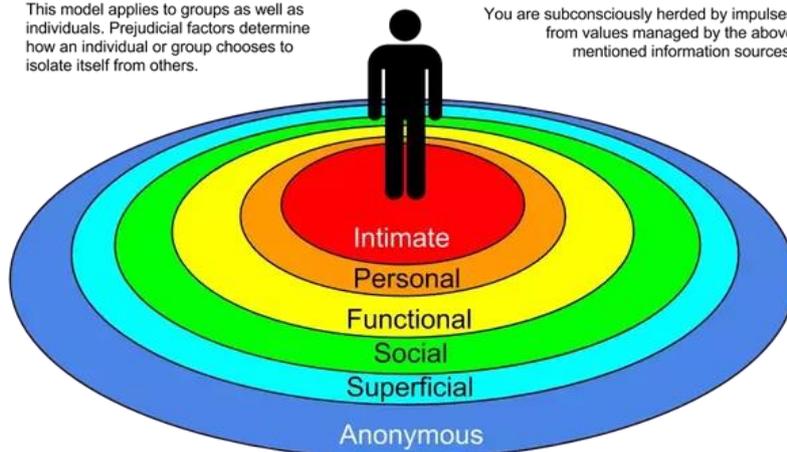
10 Proxemics

ZONES OF INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION

FIRST IMPRESSIONS that control how we interact with others is governed by the media we choose as our primary source of information: Generations of people existing before the Internet had only Family, schools, churches, friends, neighborhoods, and mass media controlled by a few outlets to rely on for the truth.

This model applies to groups as well as individuals. Prejudicial factors determine how an individual or group chooses to isolate itself from others.

You are subconsciously herded by impulses from values managed by the above mentioned information sources.



“Edward T. Hall (1979) described three distinct cultural factors: context, time, and space. Hall discussed how cultures fall on a continuum between high and low context. In high context cultures, there are many contextual aspects/elements that help people understand the norms and/or rules in society. Thus, communication is often taken for granted and implied” (Croucher, 2017, p. 88).

“In low context cultures, very little is left for misinterpretation” (Croucher, 2017, p. 88).

Hall “described two types of tie use: monochronic and polychronic. In a monochronic time culture people are more likely to do one more thing at a time, and planning is essential. This type of time management is more

common in low context cultures. In a polychronic time culture people are more likely to multitask more, value human interaction more than time, and have less concern for getting things done than on how they get them done. This time management is more common in high context cultures” (Croucher, 2017, p. 89).

Hall “defined this area of research as proxemics or the study of the use of space. Hall explained how each of us needs a different amount of personal space to be comfortable. When others violate our personal space, our bubble or territory, we see this violation as a threat because it violates our territoriality, or concern for space, which is culturally specific. Hall (1969) divided cultures into high and low territoriality. Cultures with high territoriality have high concern for ownership, mark their territory, and use words like ‘mine.’ This concern for space is more common in low context cultures. Culture with low territoriality have less concern for ownership, boundaries are less important for them, and they typically share ownership of things. This concern for space is more common in high context cultures” (Croucher, 2017, p. 89).

11 Value Priorities

“Shwartz (1994, 1999) argued that understanding an individual’s value priorities could explain their behaviours. Swartz (1999) identified seven types of value on which to compare cultures: conservatism, egalitarian commitment, harmony, hierarchy, mastery, affective autonomy, and intellectual autonomy” (Croucher, 2017, p. 89).

12 Schwartz’s Seven Cultural Value Types

Type	Definition
Conservatism	A society that strives to maintain the status quo and tradition and that emphasises harmonious relations.
Egalitarian Commitment	A society emphasising the wholeness of self-interests.
Harmony	A society that focuses on harmony with nature.
Hierarchy	A society that stresses hierarchy, roles, and resource allocation.
Mastery	A society that stresses active control of the social environment and a person’s right to get ahead of other people.
Affective Autonomy	A society that acknowledges people as autonomous people who are free to pursue their own pleasure-seeking, interests and desires.
Intellectual Autonomy	A society that acknowledges people as autonomous people who are free to pursue their own intellectual dreams and desire.

(Croucher, 2017, p. 89).

“Cultures that place higher on one side of the continuum have more preference for that value and perceive the other value as less important: (1) mastery versus harmony, (2) hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and (3) autonomy versus embeddedness. The relationship humankind has with nature is the essence of mastery versus harmony. Cultures that value mastery strive to control and change the world. Such cultures typically exploit the Earth to ‘advance’ their interests. Values such as ambition, competition and success are highly valued in these culture” (Croucher, 2017, p. 90).

“Cultures that value hierarchy see the distribution of hierarchy and power in economic, political and social structures as justified and necessary to maintain social order. Such structures are necessary for rules to exist” (Croucher, 2017, p. 90).

“On the other hand, egalitarian cultures see the distribution of hierarchy and power in structures as unjust. People in these cultures are encouraged and taught to move beyond hierarchies and work for one another” (Croucher, 2017, p. 90).

“Autonomy versus embeddedness is similar to Hofstede’s individualism/collectivism continuum. In more autonomous cultures people are more independent (intellectually and emotionally) and are encouraged to express their independence... In more embedded cultures people are more dependent on one another and identify with the larger group. People are more likely to identify with a shared way of life or community. Conservatism is much higher in an embedded culture, as it protects the group mentality” (Croucher, 2017, p. 90).

13 Identity

"The question of 'Who am I?' has been asked for thousands of years. The different ways in which we see/perceive ourselves are our identities. Castells (1997) said that while we have multiple identities, these identities give us a sense of place and being... we are continually negotiating and reconstructing our identities, emphasizing the integral nature of communication to identity" (Croucher, 2017, p. 98).

"Identity is a person's self-concept in relation to the world around himself/herself. You might consider your identity to be how you view yourself, and how you think, and want others to view you. It is essential to understand, and we will keep coming back to this point, that the self does not create identities alone. Identities are co-created through our communication with others" (Croucher, 2017, p. 98).

"Our identities emerge when we interact with others through communication... Our identities are enacted in interpersonal communication/contexts through two processes: avowal and ascription" (Croucher, 2017, p. 98).

"Avowal is the self that we portray" (Croucher, 2017, p. 98).

"Ascription is the process through which others attribute an identity to us, for example through stereotyping. We avow our identities and are ascribed identities in many ways, through symbols, norms, labels, etc." (Croucher, 2017, p. 99).

"We tend to have three general types of identities: human, personal, and social" (Croucher, 2017, p. 99).

13.1 Human Identities

"Human identities include those elements, views, or commonalities of ourselves that we think we share with all other humans. As people we do not survive alone, we socialise with other humans" (Croucher, 2017, p. 99).

"If we do not recognise our humanity in others, we shall not recognise it in ourselves" (Croucher, 2017, p. 99).

13.2 Personal Identities

"Personal identities are those perceptions or views of ourselves that separate/differentiate us from others in our ingroup. An ingroup is a group of people 'about whose welfare [we are] concerned, with whom [we are] willing to cooperate without demanding equitable returns, and separation from whom leads to discomfort or even pain.' Essentially, this is a group to which we feel cohesion, have shared experiences, a future, and trust" (Croucher, 2017, p. 99).

"An outgroup on the other hand is a group to which we feel less cohesion, have fewer shared experiences, do not have a shared future, and have less trust in such groups. Our personal identity differentiates us in some way from the ingroup, like our personality characteristics: being smart, tall, having glasses, having brown hair, etc." (Croucher, 2017, p. 99).

13.3 Social Identities

"Social identities are those perceptions or views of ourselves that we share with other members of our ingroups. For example, social identities can be based on our demographic characteristics (sex, ages, race/ethnicity, nationality), membership in organisations (religious affiliation, social clubs, sports team), roles we have (parent, spouse, friend), professions (professor, lawyer, doctor, waiter), or membership in a stigmatised groups (homeless, having HIV/AIDS)" (Croucher, 2017, p. 99).

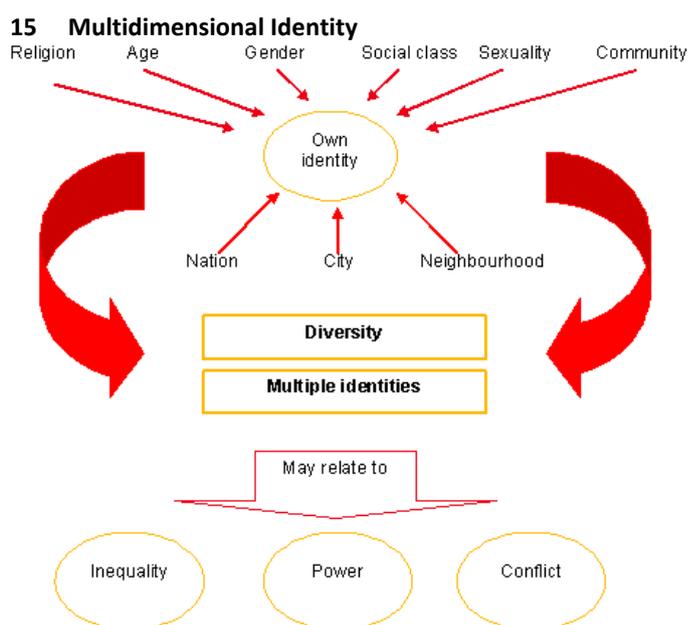
"The term *subcultural mosaic* refers to the multiplicity of subcultures, life-worlds, or group affiliations that constitute people's involvements in societies or communities at any point in time" (Prus, 1997, p. 36).

14 Identity Formation

"We develop, maintain, and refine our identities through various stages and processes throughout our lives" (Croucher, 2017, p. 99).

“Hardiman (2001) proposed four stages to social identity development... In the first stage we have an unexamined identity. This identity is shaped by the norms of the dominant culture, as the dominant culture shapes our identity and makes us who we are. In the second stage we accept the identity the dominant culture shapes for us. In the third stage we begin to question and redefine our identity because we have a reinterpretation of the dominant culture. The fourth and final stage, particularly for Western cultures, is integration. This is where white individuals in particular... become aware of their special privilege in society and integrate an awareness of minority cultures into their social identity” (Croucher, 2017, p. 100).

“This final stage is often not reached in identity development, as it is a heightened form of identity development... this process is not linear, and there is no set time period for an individual to be in any stage” (Croucher, 2017, p. 100).



“Identity is a multidimensional concept consisting of psychological and social factors, and negotiated until we reach mutual understanding and agreement on our identity. However, the modern paradigm argues that identity is an animated and dynamic notion, whose form is dependent on social context and time. Considering these two approaches to identity, scholars have proposed different types of identity, such as national, cultural, ethnic, religious, sexual, and gender, to mention a few” (Croucher, 2017, p. 100).

15.1 National Identity

“When considering national identity, we should recognise that identifying with a nation has two elements. First, members share common characteristics: common history, language(s), culture, and common systems (economic, legal, and political for example” (Croucher, 2017, p. 101).

“Second, a critical element of national identity is that when we identify as part of a nation we inherently differentiate ourselves from those who are not one of us: ingroup/outgroup differentiation” (Croucher, 2017, p. 101).

15.2 Cultural Identity

“Cultural identity includes our social identities based on cultural group memberships. While we are part of many groups (national, religious, ethnic, sexual, etc.), we attach different levels of emotional significance to these groups” (Croucher, 2017, p. 101).

“Our sense of belonging or identification with an ethnic group is out ethnicity interchangeable, they are in fact different. Race is based on an individual’s biological characteristics. Ethnicity on the other hand is based on the

cultural characteristics (nation of origin, language, culture, religion, etc.) that a group of people share” (Croucher, 2017, p. 102).

“Geertz (1973) stated religion is an integral part of the human experience. Durkheim (1976) defined a religion as a ‘unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things which are set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them’” (Croucher, 2017, p. 102).

“Our religious identity is the extent to which we identify with a religious groups” (Croucher, 2017, p. 102).

“religious identities can carry immense emotional strength/salience, as a religious identity is often very significant for people with religious faith. In fact, an individual’s religious identity and background are critical parts of his/her socialisation” (Croucher, 2017, p. 102).

“Gender identity is the extent to which a person identifies with their gender. Gender and sex are different. Gender involves the social roles and norms that society has set forth for the sexes” (Croucher, 2017, p. 103).

“Essentially, gender asks basic questions such as, what does it mean to be a real man or woman in a society, and what is masculine or feminine” (Croucher, 2017, p. 103).

“Sex on the other hand is a biological category that is determined at birth, such as chromosomes, hormones, and internal and external organs” (Croucher, 2017, p. 103).

16 Summary

“Ultimately we have multiple identities. Our identities are multifaceted and constantly evolving. These identities are evolving and changing in response to various internal and external factors... Our identities are internally and externally crafted by ourselves and by others through the process of communication” (Croucher, 2017, p. 103).

“Social identity theory introduces us to the notion that we seek out social identities that satisfy us and give us a positive image, and based on this image we categorise ourselves and others into groups. The ethnolinguistic identity theory focusses on minority ethnic groups and their language use in social contexts, particularly when they interact with members of the dominant culture. Finally, the face negotiation theory describes how we manage our identities in the face of identity challenges/conflicts” (Croucher, 2017, p. 109).

“Our identities and communication are intrinsically linked; they reinforce one another, no matter what culture we are in” (Croucher, 2017, p. 109).

“It is essential to acknowledge that people’s sense of self-worth are contextually situated, problematic in emphasis, and subject to on-going (interactive and reflective) assessments as people engage, work their ways through, and become disinvolved from situations” (Prus, 1997, p. 170).

17 References

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- Prus, R. (1997). *Subcultural Mosaics and Intersubjective Realities*. New York: State University of New York Press.