

Chapter 6

- Self-concept: a conscious, cognitive perception and assessment by an individual of himself or herself; it is one's thoughts and opinions about oneself
- Four dimensions of the self (Strang):
  - o Basic self-concept: the adolescent's view of his or her personality and "perceptions of his abilities and his status and roles in the outer world"
  - o Transitory self-concepts: ideas of self that are influenced by the mood of the moment or by a recent/continuing experience
    - Ex) a recent low grade on a test may leave a person with a temporary feeling of stupidity
    - Ex) a critical remark from parents may produce a temporary self-evaluation of laziness
  - o Social selves: the selves he or she thinks others see, which in turn influence how the individual sees himself or herself
    - If youths believe that others think they are boring or socially unacceptable, they tend to think of themselves in these negative ways
    - Could also have to do with social class and status that shape's self-concept
  - o Ideal self: the kind of person an individual would like to be
    - An ideal self that is too low impedes accomplishment and one that is too high may lead to frustration and self-depreciation
- Possible selves: the different selves we envision ourselves becoming; future not present (Oyserman and Markus)
  - o Hoped-for selves: the people we hope to be in the future
  - o Expected selves: the people we think we will likely become
  - o Feared selves: the people we dread/are afraid of becoming
  - o Ex) You may hope to become a world-famous violinist, expect to become a high school music teacher, and fear becoming an unemployed street musician
- What contributes to a positive self-concept?
  - o Significant others: those who occupy a high level of importance; they are influential and their opinions are meaningful; their views of us or the way we think they view us has a greater influence than other people
  - o Parents: the quality of family relations affect self-esteem; adolescents with high self-esteem report greater intimacy with mothers and fathers; when children perceive conflict between parents or between themselves and parents, lower self-esteem can be expected
  - o SES: low-SES students have lower self-esteem than high SES students, and the effects of SES increase with age
  - o Race/Ethnicity: with the rise of racial pride brought by the civil rights movement, it is shown that African American adolescents have high self-esteem than any other group including Caucasians; Asian American youth are found to have the lowest self-esteem levels; Latino adolescents self-esteem is midway between these two groups

- o Gender: girls self-esteem is lower than boys; males have moderately higher levels of personal self-esteem and self-satisfaction than females and that male also felt better about their physical appearance and athletic abilities; females have moderately higher behavioral conduct and moral-ethical self-esteem scores
- o Disabilities: individuals with physical disabilities have negative body images and hence more difficulty developing positive self-concepts; same is true for those with cognitive limitations such as learning disabilities
- o Stress: stress and self-esteem are negatively correlated in teens
- Erikson's view on identity development
  - o How does identity develop?
    - Erikson described the task of identity formation as one of making choices by exploring alternatives and committing to roles; it is not stable but rather an on-going process of self-reflection and change as one moves through life
    - Identity vs. Role confusion
      - Temporal perspective vs. time confusion- integrating past self with the future self so you have sense of continuity in identity
      - Self-certainty vs. self-consciousness
      - Role experimentation vs. role fixation
      - Apprenticeship vs. work paralysis
      - Sexual polarization vs. bisexual confusion- must understand masculinity and femininity so there is no confusion
      - Leadership and followership vs. authority
      - Ideological commitment vs. confusion of values
  - o What contributes to a strong identity?
- Marcia's idea of identity status
  - o There are dual criteria that must be met before one can attain a mature identity- one must undergo crises and make commitments
  - o Four basic identity statuses:
    - Identity diffused- those who have not experienced a crisis period, nor have they made any commitment to an occupation, religion, a political philosophy, sex roles, or personal standards of behavior; typically have low self-esteem are easily influenced by peers and lack meaningful relationships/friendships
      - Ex) "Where do you want to live when you grow up?" "I don't know, I've never thought about it"
    - Foreclosure- those who have not yet experienced a crisis but have made commitments to occupations and ideologies that are not the result of their own searching but are ready-made and handed down to them by parents; not able to distinguish between their own goals and their parents goals for them
      - Adolescents could also adopt a negative identity, or an identity based on rejecting parental and societal values

- Ex) A youth who decides they want to be a doctor because his or her parent is a doctor
- Moratorium- a period of delay granted to someone who is not yet ready to make a decision or assume an obligation; marked by a period of continual crisis and indecision and individuals in this period tend to be anxious; adolescents often uncertain they have selected the right major in college or may be unhappy with their college experience
  - Most college students have a moratorium status and so are actively trying to figure out what they want from their lives
- Identity achieved- those who have experienced a psychological moratorium, have resolved their identity crisis by carefully evaluating various alternatives and choices, and have come to conclusions and decisions on their own
- o Critique of Marcia:
  - His four statuses do not capture the entirety of the identity concept as envisioned by Erikson
  - Focuses too much on the crisis/commitment aspect of identity
  - Fails to address personal continuity
  - Fails to adequately capture the integration of different parts of the self or the sense of unity
  - Identity statuses do not always develop in an exact sequence
- Identity as a process
  - o Erikson and Marcia have outcome approaches, and do not concentrate on the process by which adolescents find their identity
  - o Identity control system (Burke): a construct that consists of two interpersonal and three intrapersonal components
    - Interpersonal components- social behavior and interpersonal feedback
    - Intrapersonal factors- self concept, identity standards (beliefs about how one should behave), and comparator (compares one's self-concept with identity standards)
    - As individuals behave and get feedback, their self-concept is affected; if there is a discrepancy between one's self-concept and one's identity standards (as compared through comparator) then an individual must modify one of the three intrapersonal components to increase consistency
  - o Adolescents in different identity states handle discrepancies differently
    - Diffused individuals do not experience any discrepancies
    - Foreclosed individuals overemphasize feedback from parents and significant others and form standards too early on
    - Moratoriums actively seek feedback and are willing to adjust their identity standards
    - Individuals who are identity achieved have also solidified their identity standards like those in foreclosure, however they develop them more slowly and have based them on a more broad-based feedback
- Three styles of identity searching (Berzonsky and Kuk):