

# Co-cultural identities

[Art & Culture](#)



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Co-Cultural Identities Cultural identity is the identity of a group or culture, or of an individual, as far as one is influenced by one's belonging to a group or culture. In recent decades, a new form of identification has emerged which breaks down the understanding of the individual as a coherent whole subject into a collection of various cultural identifiers.

These cultural identifiers may be the result of various conditions including: location, gender, race, history, nationality, language, sexuality, religious beliefs, aesthetics and ethnicity. The divisions between cultures can be very fine in some parts of the world, especially places such as the United States, where the population is ethnically diverse and social unity is based primarily on common social values and beliefs. Everyone is a part of many co-cultural identities and they all have an effect on how one communicates with others.

Some co-cultural identities may have more of an influence on someone's decision making while communicating than others, but they all do affect us in one way or another. Some of these co-cultural identities you are born into, such as ethnicity or gender and others you gradually fall into throughout your life such as religion, depending on your experiences. No matter what co-cultural identities you belong to, they influence how we communicate with others because they are factors of what makes us who we are, and we can't help that.

What we can help is to know what those co-cultural identities are so we can understand when why we might be having communication problems with someone who belongs to other co-cultural identities. Also of interest is the interplay between cultural identity and new media. Rather than necessarily

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representing an individual's interaction within a certain group, cultural identity may be defined by the social network of people imitating and following the social norms as presented by the media.

Accordingly, instead of learning behavior and knowledge from cultural groups, individuals may be learning these social norms from the media to build on their cultural identity. Political correctness is a term which denotes language, ideas, policies, and behavior seen as seeking to minimize social and institutional offense in occupational, gender, racial, cultural, sexual orientation, certain other religions, beliefs or ideologies, disability, and age-related contexts.

An example of political correctness is the changing terminology used to describe handicapped people. In the past the term "crippled" was perfectly acceptable and not considered offensive. At some point, some politician decided "crippled" was degrading and the preferred term changed to "handicapped." This, too, was eventually deemed offensive and "disabled" became the preferred term. Today, even "disabled" is considered degrading to some and "differently abled" and "physically challenged" are used by those people.

The same can be said for the changing uses of terms for Black Americans: "Negro" and "colored," once perfectly acceptable terms, became offensive during the 1970s and "Afro-American" and "Black" came into use, which in turn gave way to "African-American," and in broader usage, "people of color." As well as language, political correctness discourages the use of racial or stereotypes in fiction out of concern that these stereotypes may become self-perpetuating.

For example, frequently seeing the image black gang-members decked out in gold chains, carrying guns and listening to rap may pressure young black people into seeing this lifestyle as the more 'acceptable' choice for their racial group. The common image of female-dominated occupations, such as; nurses, secretaries, care workers, etc, and of male-dominated occupations; IT workers, military, machinery operators, mechanics, etc. , can discourage individuals of either gender from considering those occupations traditionally belonging to the other.