

What make's up one's identity

Sociology, Identity



There are a great deal of factors that altogether form one's identity, the most relevant and main ones are culture, which includes nationality as well as religion, intellect, personality, and world exposure. I. Culture is a crucial factor when it comes to forming one's identity. A. The characteristics of our country of origin. * The power that our nationality has on our person. * The language, our culinary traditions, clothing etc. B. Religion. * The values. * The traditions. II. Ways of interpreting situations and our personality, strongly mirror who we are.

A. The elements that formed our intellect. * Education and upbringing. * Political views, as well as other ideas concerning society's organization. B. The social attributes we gain. * The individuals in our surroundings. * The experiences we go through. III. The strong impact of travelling on our identity. A. Eye-openers that broaden our minds. * The new cultures we integrate. * The new people we meet and their influence on our personality. B. Developing a sense of belonging to more than one culture. * The process of becoming a " halfie".

Merriam Webster's online dictionary defines identity as " the distinguishing character or personality of an individual", which is undoubtedly true. Firstly there is culture, in other words, the land we feel we belong in and the characteristics that come with belonging to this particular country. Seldom do people remember to include one's personality in the definition of his or hers identity. However, it is extremely important because it is precisely what distinguishes us from our compatriots; otherwise our identity would not be uniquely ours, but the one of everyone from the same land.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that identity is permanently subject to change, whether it be through travelling or new experiences. The combination of all these factors are what forms one's identity. Culture probably consists of attributes that form more than half of our identity, and it is mainly formed of our nationality and our religion. It is essential, that one feels a strong bond between him and his country; this is the reason why nationality is so often spoken about, when the topic of identity is being discussed.

An individual needs to feel as if he has a homeland, meaning a place where he can relate to others because they live in the same environment, have the same climate, the same state regulations, duties, as well benefit from the same rights. To that effect, one feels a sense of comradeship between him and his "soil". This is why individuals sometimes voluntarily join the army, because they feel obliged to defend their country. And some soldiers today, in particular the ones of the American army, are sent all the way across the world to Iraq for the sole purpose of fighting for their state.

Individuals feel a strong need to be patriotic, and some are willing to go to great lengths to show to others why they believe their country is "best". A British character in Oliver Goldsmith's text "National prejudice", who is "cocking his hat, and assuming such an air of importance as if he had possessed all the merit of the English nation" (Goldsmith), clearly illustrates this point because he makes discriminatory statements in the name of his nation. All of the above goes to show the fundamental impact one's nationality has on his or hers identity.

Moreover, our country of origin also imparts to us certain characteristics related to it, mainly a language to communicate amongst each other, local food, outfits, dances etc. They are basically the elements we see displayed when establishments such as schools or universities, prepare "international days", when individuals build stands showing the particularities of their country. They also contribute immensely to the formation of our identity, they add to the concept of nationalism. Our language gives us a unique way we can use to communicate with our compatriots.

Each and every country has its own language or dialect that makes up its people's identities. Furthermore, there are local recipes that we learn which even as used as "comfort foods" to cure homesickness. There are traditional dances, for example the flamenco in Spain, the "dabke" in Lebanon or the French Can-Can, outfits and holidays the country celebrates, especially independence day. To sum up, all of these elements make up one's nationality, which contributes to one's culture. Culture is not only formed through one's nationality, but also by his religion.

Even though some individuals believe that religion is not really a very significant part in one's identity, I believe that it is crucial and that it is present in most of our decisions. Whether you are Christian, Muslim, Jewish or even Atheist, this is a major characteristic of your identity. Religions first of all come with a set of values and rules we should follow. For example, a Muslim woman, should refrain from wearing revealing clothes, and preferably should wear an "abaya" and headscarf, in order to respect her and others; she should not have sexual relations before marriage.

Men or women are not allowed to be homosexual, which actually is a value for many religions, they should pray five times a day, go do a pilgrimage in Mecca once in their lifetime, Buddhist are to consider the cow as sacred etc. The values are, like many other religions; not to sin, to pray and be good to one another. On the other hand, religions also provides us with traditions to follow, for example the famous Christian holiday Christmas, or the Ramadan for Muslims, having Bat Mitzvah's for Jews and Easter.

Our religion really helps in terms of giving us a path to follow in our lives. The aim in our lives is to respect it as much as possible; therefore it is part of our culture. The last elements discussed, refer solely to the parts of our identity that are formed and settled at birth, we should not forget the impact of how we develop as a person, in other terms, ourfamily, our type of education, and the experiences we go through. A person's education is an integral part of his identity, and education involves what one is taught in school, as well as at home.

Family has an important role in making you a legitimate member of society, firstly they give you a name which identifies you, and afterwards, they provide you with a mandatory set of guidelines to follow throughout yourchildhood. These guidelines give you certain values and rules you should follow, just like religion does. Whether the individuals raising you are strict or lenient, they need to provide you with moral grounds in order for you to grow up to be a valuable citizen.

Robert Coles in his text " I listen to my parents and wonder what they believe", overviews this point concerning morals, he says that children are lost emotionally without the guidance of their parents. Moreover, he <https://assignbuster.com/what-makes-up-ones-identity/>

criticizes the latter for disregarding their children's maturity and choose to turn a blind eye towards this issue; " this issue is not the moral capacity of children but the default of us parents who fail to respond to inquiries" (Coles).

Therefore, we notice that the role of one's parents is crucial in developing the kind of individual he will grow to be. Moreover, our parents decide to which type of school to send us, which is the other major part of our education. Depending on if they send you to a Catholic school, boarding school, a French Lycee, a British or American high school, you will receive a specific kind of education. Henceforth, you will be raised with their particular values and probably base your future decisions on what they have taught you.

In the end, these two major components of our education will form who we are as adults, in other words, our political and social views. For example, do we support the left or the right, the republicans or the democrats, the conservatists or liberalists etc.? These ideas place us in society. All of the above are the elements that form our intellect, which in itself is an important part of our personality. We simply cannot deny the impact that the people surrounding us throughout our life, have on our identities.

How you behave strongly reflects who you are, and obviously, in order to integrate a community, it is mandatory to act like them, henceforth; you begin to acquire certain characteristics that are similar to the ones of others. Let's say one is raised in a racist community, unfortunately, this individual will probably grow up to be a racist, because this is what the people around him told him was the right way to think. On top of that, another important

factor in forming how we think, are our experiences through life. For example, in Edward T.

Hall's "The Arab World", his particular meeting with an Arab gentleman, in which he was sitting on a couch in a hotel lobby and assumed this gentleman was invading his privacy, when the latter was simply being his normal self. He comes to certain conclusions about Arabic people, stating they have no respect for personal space or important moral values. This is an experience he went through, which forged the way he thinks, and forevermore, these ideas are part of who he is. The impact that travelling has on the formation of our identity is undeniable, it gives us priceless characteristics that make us better people in the end.

The previous factors evokes, culture and personality, are bound to impact every single citizen of the world, however, unfortunately, we do not all have the luxury to travel, but those that do, are able to experience new cultures, and meet new people through living abroad. I personally, have lived in various countries, surrounded every time by three distinctly different cultures; I was born in London, I spent the first fifteen years of my life in Nigeria, afterwards I transferred to a boarding school in Switzerland, and at the moment I am finally living in my land of origin, which is Lebanon.

And I can proudly confirm, that being exposed to all these cultures have made me the open-minded and well-rounded individual that I am today. Thanks to that, I no longer abide to prejudices, nor agree with stereotypes, because I have been lucky enough to be aware of the different types of people and be able to understand them. Therefore finally, it is this combination of changing where I lived and development of my personality

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that I believe forged my identity. Afterwards, your identity is subject to change, you begin to feel a sense of belonging to more than one culture.

This is what Amin Maalouf illustrates in his story titled " Deadly Identities". He says " I have been asked many times with the best intentions in the world, if I felt more French or more Lebanese. I always give the same answer " Both" " (Maalouf). Or even in Ethar El-Katatney's article " Identity Crisis 101", the young El-Gohary claims that " she is balanced in her love for both countries"(El-Katatney), and it is the same author that introduced this idea of being a " halfie".

Individuals are no longer able to consider themselves belonging to one culture more than the other. They do always feel a strong sense of attachments to their routes; however their true identity has altered, and therefore so will their state of mind. All of the above truly portrays the strong impact of traveling on one's identity. To conclude, we notice that it is one's cultural exposure, which lead to the elements contributing to the formation of his identity. We are not born with an unchangeable identity, actually quite the opposite, it never cesses to change.

Individuals will always be exposed to new places, new people, new ways of thinking and these will transforms who they are. It all depends on culture and personality.

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