

# Social concepts

Sociology



Our Identity is a Basic and Common Social Concept Social concepts we have studied within the room are actually very familiar and very common in our daily lives. They are not foreign ideas rather they are actually our comfort zone. Strange as it may seem, each individual understands various sociological concepts without the need of an academic learning. One of the most important and basic sociological concept is culture. Culture has always influenced our actions and behavior since it is basically the primary link we have with our group or society. How we live and how we believe in certain things are shaped by our culture. Culture, as a sociological concept, is our way of life (Levin, 2008). Culture is basically the influential root of all other concepts such as social status, social institution, norms and identity (Stoley, 2005). Culture is not all encompassing as we still belong to different subcultures. Basically, as we grow up, we are socialized into the dominant culture's way of living. As we mature, gain knowledge, and develop our own identity, we begin to see that there are also different values and norms depending on each subculture. One example of a subculture is the youth subculture. Within this subculture, the members have a different set of values or priorities, such as friendship and intimate relationship.

In connection to the concept of culture is the concept of norm. Every culture has its own set of norms and values. The values that the culture propagates influence the actions of its members, thus creating the norm, or the normal and accepted behavior within the society (Kirby, et. al., 2000). Because we have different cultures and subcultures, we have different sets of values and norms, as well. It doesn't mean that we have similar norms all over the world. An example of this is the norm of marriage. In other cultures, such as the American culture, marriage can be dissolved through divorce. In most

Catholic cultures, divorce is not readily accepted as they think of marriage differently, that it cannot be dissolved by man's laws. Another example is having a patriarchal or matriarchal society. This doesn't mean that one culture is right and the other is wrong. It just means we have a wide variety of values and norms that we believe in. This indicates that human nature is not at all simple. It is a complicated nature as it can vary depending on how one is socialized and how one accepts changes or at least tolerates that there are different sides to a pyramid.

With culture and norms, we create an identity of our own (Giddens, 2006).

Who we are is greatly impacted by how we are brought up and with the social environment we grew up in. This concept is very important for our individual growth and success. Our identity is the combination of our culture, norms, values and the choices we make as we go through our lives. As each one belongs to a culture, a subculture or a group, each individual creates his own identity with a piece of how and what he believes in based on that culture, subculture and group he belongs to. Our identity is not fixed. We change from time to time. Although we have a strong sense of who we are, we can still change as we encounter various people from different walks of life and from different cultures and societies. This makes human very interesting as even if we have a strong sense of identity, we can still adapt to different social temperatures.

#### References

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