

# Symbolic interactionism: piercings and tattoos

Sociology



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Symbolic interactionism occurs in society on a daily basis. It covers everything from a sour look on your face or a slouched body and crossed arms to the way you dress or the color of your skin. The symbolic interactionism I will cover in particular is body piercings and tattoos. What used to be a large taboo is becoming seemingly acceptable. If you were shown a white male in a business suit and a black male dressed in big baggy clothes, who would you assume was guilty of a crime?

In most cases we hear about on the media, our instincts would tell us that the black male was the one who committed the crime. We base this decision off of the color of his skin and the clothes he is wearing. However there is no actual evidence that supports that the black male is guilty of the crime. Symbolic interactionism happens whether we're aware we are doing it or not. Humans judge others based on the way they present themselves.

According to poll taken in 2003, in the United States thirty-six percent of people ages eighteen to twenty five have at least one tattoo and forty percent of people ages twenty-six to forty also have at least one tattoo. These statistics are far greater than the percentages from years ago. A poll from 1963 stated that only six percent of Americans in total had tattoos. Tattoos popularity is still growing here in the United States but all forms of this body art have been around for centuries. When a person goes into a job interview, they dress nicely in order to make a good impression.

At most places tattoos are considered unprofessional. Let's say you're interviewing two people for a job. They are both applying for a business position. Their credentials are the same. They are both wearing professional business attire. One has tattoos that are visible. The other does not. Many <https://assignbuster.com/symbolic-interactionism-piercings-and-tattoos-research-paper-samples/>

people will be turned away simply based off of their outward appearance. The same concept applies to body piercings. To some, piercings and tattoos are a form of self-expression. They see their bodies as a canvas.

Others see tattoos as damage to body. They believe that people such as thugs, gangs, or prisoners is the image that a tattoo represents regardless of what the tattoo is, says, or represents. Personally I understand how employers can find an excessive amount of tattoos to be unacceptable in the workplace. However, I believe that how well they do their job is far more important than if they have tattoos or not. What do you picture in your mind when you think of the member of NASA? I picture nice pants, buzz cut or slicked back hair.

Usually they have a clean shaven face and are very professional. Maybe you imagine something more stereotypical like glasses, a tie, their shirt tucked in, maybe a pocket protector? Whatever it is that you picture in your head, you have some sort of idea in your brain what “ smart” and “ professional” is supposed to look like. Recently we landed a rover on mars. A few of the team members in the control room had unconventional outward appearances. As an example, one engineer had a Mohawk haircut and the team leader, a male, was sporting earrings.

NASA seems to have grown tolerant to the changing standards of appearances. Instead of basing who they chose to hire by how one presents themselves, they chose their employees because of their expertise and knowledge in their field. In the future this taboo will continue to decrease just as it has done in past years. Tattoos will become more acceptable and the percentages will continue to rise. This will cause a chain reaction that forces <https://assignbuster.com/symbolic-interactionism-piercings-and-tattoos-research-paper-samples/>

more employers to hire people regardless of tattoos or body piercings.  
Society is forever changing.