

# A reflection on social identities

Business



I am a female aged 22 years from and I hail from a French, industrial family. I was born and raised in France, but I moved to the United States of America when I was four years of age. The social factors that I identify with at the moment are my ethnicity, religion, and my European friends from the school whom I feel comfortable talking to. Since I am abroad, I feel my nationality more keenly than when I am at home. This is evident in from the fact that I tend to bond more with my national group than students of United States of America origin.

It was not until I was 14 years old when I left home for boarding that I started becoming aware of these identities. This is the time when questions about diversity started to dawn on me. The environment which I was in shaped and influenced my ideas related to my ethnicity. This owes to the fact that I met with people from all political divide and contemporary events. Similarly, I met with a lot of black people from different ethnic backgrounds such as Ivory Coast.

Unger, (1979), asserts that issue of identity is a complex phenomenon since there is not a single problem of personal identity, but rather a wide range of questions that are loosely connected. For instance, I often ask myself “ who am I” and what identities make me the person I am. I consider a person’s identity as what makes him or her unique as an individual and different from others. In addition, individual identity involves a network of convictions and values that shapes and structures ones life (Hirsch, 1982). People have different identities, which they can, substitute for new ones or even live without any.

In my school, students used to identify with different social factors that are common in their context. In my own perspective, I look at two social factors that determine my identity, ethnicity and religion. Ethnicity, for example, is a concept that cannot disappear but rather change its form and substance. It is practically impossible for people to build their sense of identity on abstract concepts of humanity. On the contrary, they ought to build it around concrete substances, which are ethnic, and culture specific such as food preference, customs, and language among others. The fact that I tend to identify with students from my nationality owes to the fact that anthropologically, a person's sense of identity is molded by his or her socialization within smaller groups.

In school, I find myself socializing with a group which mostly comprise of girls whom I am comfortable with. This just comes out naturally. In this era, I think issues that have to do with religious and ethnic factors that define a person have been in the spotlight. More often than not, this issue has been over romanticized with people jumping into the vehicle without weighing the factors seriously. Ethnic identity is compact when a people come from an ethnically oppressed group (Garrett, 1998). In most cases, however, when religion and ethnicity are set exclusively as determinants of identity, then it may lead malignant and violent political circumstance at times.

In a situation where an individual feel that religion and ethnic background determine identity, then the individual perceive those who exist in the world as him or her against the other. In my case, Christianity sets a stage for me to determine those whom to embrace in my world and lock out the ones outside my circle and different from me. I cannot, for instance, identify with a <https://assignbuster.com/a-reflection-on-social-identities/>

religion such as Islam or Hinduism because it is not part and parcel of my cultural identity. It is also paramount to note that people who subscribe to ethnic and religious concepts as primary identity determiners are on the decrease and viewing ourselves through this will be a dangerous precedent (Baker, 2000). Individuals, therefore, ought to embrace an ideal which is cosmopolitan.

Furthermore, people should be at liberty to forge their identities out of their own choices guided by their own experiences. They ought to acknowledge the fact that people are different and complicated in their own ways and transverse ethnic and religious boundaries building a relationship with the people who are of similar interests and values. The urge to swap my identity constantly arise but deep within me, I find myself succumbing to the strong forces of ethnic, religious, and socializing with friends whom we share the same nationality. In my own honest opinion, identifying with a religion or an ethnic group is not wrong provided it does not exclusively isolate one from the others. In conclusion, as I had stated earlier, the concept of identity is a complex one which ought to be treated with care because of its fragility, failure to which, it might bear negative results. However, one ought to have the freedom to identify with what he or she perceives right.

Regardless of whether one is a Christian or a Muslim, his or her nationality, the ethnic background where an individual hails from and the group in which he or she associates with has to be out of free choice. The autobiography sought to look into the social factors that shape identity. Religion, ethnic groupings, and nationality came out as strong determinants of identity.

Although these factors may have negative effects, individuals tend to identify with them.